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WILHELMINA

MARGRAVINE OF BAIREUTH

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Frontispiece, Vol. II.

BUST OF THE MARGRAVINE
IN THE HOHENZOLLERN MUSEUM, BERLIN
Published for the first time.

WILHELMINA

MARGRAVINE OF BAIREUTH

BY

EDITH E. CUTHELL

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

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WILHELMINA THE WIFE

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THE ACCESSION

Margrave Frederic "the Well-beloved."—The Margravine smartens up her Court.—A welcome visitor.—To the Russian camp.—Frau von Sonnsfeld makes additions to the Court circle.—A state visit to Erlangen.—A visit to the Prince Bishop.—The glories of Pommersfeld. A question of precedence.—The Margravine as a dog lover.—Interests, social and intellectual.—The Margrave fruitlessly to Denmark.—A birthday *fête*.—The fall of the old enemy.—The Bishop comes to stay.—Wilhelmina the peacemaker.

Margrave Frederic, the "Well-beloved," the "Unforgettable," was twenty-fours years old when he succeeded to the principality of Baireuth. His reign was the heyday of the prosperity and glory of his country. At his death, which, it is said, was presaged by his meeting his own phantasm, his grateful subjects struck a medal bearing his bust with the motto, "*Fama perennis erit*," and hesitated whether to inscribe on his coffin, "the gracious," "the affable," or "the good."

We have seen how his *fiancée* described his personal appearance; his many portraits show him to have been a fine man, muscular, of good presence, with the wide brow of a musician, an open, pleasant face with good-humoured mouth and large eyes. Altogether a prepossessing person, quite deserving of the title of affable.

He was naturally polite, hail-fellow-well-met, and

condescending. As Margrave, he was wont to ride bare-headed through the streets, looking up at the windows and greeting everybody, and he was fond of going to country feasts and popular gatherings. He listened to what anybody had to say, and liked to be met with open confidence.

It went very much against the grain with him to punish anybody. There is only one instance on record of his having lost his temper, and come to blows. A certain groom, who had won his favour very much by his bold riding in the hunting drives, was with him as he was contemplating a fine hat just come from Paris. The Margrave showed it to the servant. The latter, exclaiming that it would suit him capitally, stuck it on his own head, which so incensed the Prince that he boxed his ears soundly, and hurled him and the hat out of the door. A couple of days later, however, he forgave him completely, but did not restore him to favour.

He was once hunting in the wild forest country of the Fichtelgebirge, when he saw an old peasant of eighty standing weeping at the door of his hut. The kind-hearted Prince asked him what ailed him, and the old man replied that his father had shaken and whipped him. The astonished Prince was then confronted by the father, a still more venerable man aged a hundred and four ! Needless to say he effected a reconciliation, and had the portrait of the centenarian painted, and it still hangs in the Ermitage.

Though fond of jokes, he was very abstemious. The drinking habits so prevalent at his father's Court, and, indeed, at that of Berlin, and among all the German potentates of that age, found no favour in his eyes. Supported by his fastidious and refined wife, he completely abolished heavy drinking at Baireuth. He did not smoke at all, and, like Count Seckendorff, he must have had to make-believe when he sat at Frederic William's *Tabagie.*

His boyhood had been spent in the quietest of country life at Weferlingen. He was brought up like a peasant, developing sporting tastes and a splendid physique. So muscularly strong was he, that it is said of him that he could lift a wooden horse such as is used at gymnasiums, with a man on it. He was devoted to the game of bowls, and had a bowling-green laid out at the Ermitage, twelve hundred paces long, and could often roll the ball in in two shots. He was also very fond of billiards.

A splendid horseman and over bold, he often rode from Baireuth to Erlangen, between thirty and forty miles, in four hours. He had a passion for hunting and shooting. But the ten years at the Geneva University and a subsequent visit to Paris which had succeeded his running wild at Weferlingen made him a meet comrade and sympathetic companion to his cultivated and intellectual wife. He spoke and wrote French and Italian fluently. He loved astronomy, and made a collection of Natural History. Wilhelmina kept his University note-book of 1728 with his geometrical exercises in it. Fond of chess, in 1746 he sent for the famous Jewish player, Hirschel Baruch, to come and exhibit at Baireuth. Margrave Frederic was as accomplished and artistic as he was sporting. He played on the flute, 'cello, and a sort of bagpipes, *Musette*. A specimen which belonged to him is still to be seen at Baireuth. He painted well in water-colours, and drew well, making his own architect's designs. In art a connoisseur, he could name a master at a glance. He has also been surnamed the "Architect," the "Baireuth Augustus."

The new Margrave and Margravine succeeded to a mass of debts and difficulties. They retired to the Brandenburger Palace for the first few weeks of deep mourning. Almost at the outset the officials tried to make mischief between husband and wife, and to get them under their thumb, after the manner of the Anspach Council with their hare-brained young rulers.

Frau von Sonnsfeld warned the Margravine to open her husband's eyes. But he resented Wilhelmina's interference, and as each had a lively temper, words passed between them, their first quarrel.

"But to be wrath with one we love——" No sooner had the Margrave thus left her than Wilhelmina was so overcome that she fell into a fainting fit, and was laid on her bed; they thought her dying. The Margrave was hurriedly sent for, alarmed, distressed, contrite.

When she came to there ensued a long explanation, and each apologised. Wilhelmina had no wish to interfere in business, but, on the other hand, she did not want to be kept in the dark. She knew the Margrave to be able and clever, but he was inexperienced, and she wished he should remember his father's last injunctions and keep the Ministers in check. So an agreement was made and they "became better friends than ever." To do her justice, the Margravine never did interfere over business matters, but her influence over her husband in every other way was undeniable, and it went on increasing.

It was impossible that it should have been otherwise. Wilhelmina was not only the senior to her husband in years, his superior in intellect and cultivation, and with more depth of character, but she was also his superior in rank. Never did she forget her position as the daughter of a King. A true grand-daughter of Frederic I., she stood on her dignity and her precedence. She was always known as Her Royal Highness, whereas her husband was only Serene Highness. A part of the Hofgarten at Baireuth, which she laid out, was known till quite recent times as "Her Royal Highness's little garden."

Money was so short that the Margravine had herself to defray the expenses of the Ministers sent to Berlin and Denmark. One of the Margrave's first acts was to institute a weekly audience on Tuesdays, when anyone could call and see him and talk to him. He would not

dismiss any of his father's servants without a gratuity, and came to loggerheads with the Council by dismissing them without their sanction. So, to put a spoke in their wheel, he took on Ellrodt, his late father's secretary and confidential adviser, to instruct him in business, and back him up against it.

The Ellrodts, the father, and the son Fritz, Margrave Frederic's favourite Ministers (the grandfather, Court-chaplain, had been only a preacher at Gefres), thus began a career which in the succeeding reign culminated in their being made Counts of the Empire.

After these preliminary skirmishes, the next few weeks passed "quietly enough." The Margravine was going through a new *régime* and diet, and her health was improving somewhat. A great deal of exercise was prescribed, and nothing after that recent reconciliation pleased her so much as accompanying the Margrave every evening, when he went shooting in the woods. As she could not walk, he had a carriage contrived for her. The Margravine actually began to learn to shoot, herself. But we may be sure that she only took up such a practice out of the wish to companionise her husband, as it was quite foreign to her dainty tastes and fine feelings. She apologises about it in a letter to Frederic:—

"What will you say, my dearest brother, when you learn that I have been merciless enough to kill three does, two foxes, and a cat, which they said was bewitched, and that I therefore wished to put an end to? But, after having received a mortal wound, he looked at me so pitifull, and miauled so nicely and so melodiously, that I repented me of my cruelty, as I could not now make him the conductor of the fine orchestra which you heard here."

In her Memoirs she justifies herself further:—

"It was rather to kill time that I made war on the animals, to amuse myself, for I do not care for sport, and I gave it up directly I had other occupations. My great joy has always been study, music, and, above all, the delight of society . . . My health no longer allows me to devote myself to the first as formerly, and the music and the society were detestable."

A pleasant change, therefore, at the end of June must have been the advent at Baireuth of the courtly and travelled Baron, "*le fameux Pöllnitz.*" Frederic William had been so pleased with his Memoirs, which had recently appeared, that he had taken him back into favour again, and after all his rambling and roving, his dodging of his creditors and his polyglot love-makings, the Baron had now a post and a pension at the Prussian Court. Pöllnitz brought the King's congratulations on the Margrave's accession, and Wilhelmina was delighted to see her old acquaintance again, who, with his gossip of all the Courts and health resorts of Europe, "was a great resource to us and amused us much" in those dull days of mourning.

An interlude was a little jaunt to see the Russian troops on their way to join the Emperor's forces on the Rhine. Accompanied by Pöllnitz, the Margravial pair drove thirty or forty miles to Vilseck, a little old town on the Vils in the Upper Palatinate, and spent the night at a monastery. In command of the troops was General Keith, the Irishman, the Margravine erroneously calls him, for he was the son of the Earl Marshal of Scotland. Though then in the Russian service, he subsequently became one of Frederic's favourites and a Prussian Field-Marshal. The Margravine drove out to inspect the troops, finding herself, as Frederic jokingly put it in writing to her, "surrounded by what is most barbarous on the earth," and he hoped that "they will not much longer be able to boast of possessing the most precious treasure in Germany." Very different to her smart Prussian troops were these barbarians who ate toadstools and drank muddy water. To the Margravine's carriage were led two deserters, condemned to be hung, who were spared at her intercession. The poor wretches knelt on the ground and rubbed their heads against it as a sign of gratitude; happily their heads were hard. Their general she found a "very polite man, used to good society." It was their

first meeting; they were to die the night of Hochkirch, —he leading Frederic's van.

With much ceremony was kept in July the new Margravine's twenty-sixth birthday. Frederic sent a present, her husband gave her magnificent jewels, increased her allowance, and, what was best of all, gave her the Ermitage for her very own. Even from her mother came kind words. The latter had recently told Frederic, when showing him presents given her by people she liked, and which she had placed at Monbijou: "See, how I still require two marble tables for those corners, but I will receive them from no other hands than Wilhelmina's." He hastened to send the hint to Baireuth, which was doubtless taken.

The first year or two after her accession were probably the happiest of the Margravine's life. The war clouds had rolled by, she was happy in her husband's love, at peace with her relations. "The most beautiful child in the world" was growing up to be "the most beautiful Princess in the world," as Lehndorf called her. Wilhelmina was busy and interested, full of ambitions and plans for the improvement of her adopted country.

She had begun instantly with the Court orchestra, which she had stigmatised as inferior to the wild cat's dying miaul. Frederic attempted to secure for her the hautboy-player from the Margrave of Schwedt's orchestra. Margravine Sophia would willingly have pleased her sister, but her "brutal" better-half was intractable.

Quantz, the ugly, conceited little man, who played so magnificently on the flute, an old acquaintance since the days of King Augustus's visit to Berlin, came on a visit to Baireuth. Gerhard, a local artist, appointed gentleman-usher, has immortalised his funny, crumpled face, and the portrait hangs in the Ermitage. Gerhard also now engraved the late Margrave and the present. The Court was largely increased, and the Margravine had her own household. Herr von Westerhagen was

made gentleman-usher, and a Count Schönburg, son of a very rich Count of the Empire, appointed her chamberlain.

During August she was "up to the ears in the chase," as she wrote to Frederic, by day in the woods after animals, and during the hot summer nights trying to exterminate the gnats. An attempt to kill the latter by burning gunpowder nearly resulted in the Margravine burning herself and her maid to death!

Frederic's garden-making at Rüppin spurred on his sister to many improvements in her new domain at the Ermitage. The house, as we know, was far too small, but there was no money that year for adding to it. The Margravine, however, made her plans and designs, and drove up almost daily to superintend the laying out of many new walks in the beech-woods and fir-groves above the river.

Through evil report and good report Frau von Sonnsfeld had been Wilhelmina's faithful friend and companion. Her middle-aged common-sense and calmer judgment had often stepped in to the aid of her young mistress's impulsive temperament. It was only natural, therefore, that now, when the latter had come to her own, Sonnsfeld should reap her reward. First she provided for her nephew, Count of Burghausen, a clever, if unsteady, young fellow. His father, of a good Silesian family, had run through his fortune of £60,000, and the children lived on their relations. During his frequent visits to his aunt, young Burghausen had made great friends with the Margrave, who now gave him a captaincy in the Baireuth Imperial Regiment. Burghausen fell deeply in love with his beautiful and clever young cousin, Dorothea von Marwitz. But she would have nothing to say to him.

Sonnsfeld now sent for Dorothea's two sisters, Albertine and Caroline. The latter, a very charming girl, had not been more than a fortnight at Court before she captivated the eligible Count Schönburg, for whom

all the young ladies in society at Baireuth had angled in vain. Neither of the sisters, however, displaced Dorothea in the Margravine's affections. Wilhelmina had educated and trained her, they were sympathetic on every point, and bound by the closest friendship. Inseparable, they had no secrets from each other—as yet.

Thus, with varied amusements and interests—friendship, flirtation, music-making and gardening, shooting in the Thiergarten woods outside Baireuth, and dancing on the rough old floor of the hunting lodge, the exercise doing the Margravine good—the autumn sped away. To the people of Baireuth it seemed as if the gay old times of Margrave George William had returned. The Margrave, having wheeled his Council into line, and remodelled his Court, now received in state the homage of his subjects, first at Baireuth, and then at Erlangen, the capital of the Culmbach principality, now merged into Baireuth.

Six years before, Pöllnitz, on his way to Carlsbad, had paid a visit to Erlangen and the fascinating, if notorious, Dowager.

"Forty years ago Erlangen was but a little village in the middle of a forest of fir-trees. The Margrave Christian Ernst, giving shelter to the French, who left their country after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, assigned to them Erlangen to settle in. When they cut down the woods they built the Town to which they gave the name of Christian-Erlangen, in memory of their benefactor. All the streets are in a straight line. The French have set up all sorts of manufactories here, and have made it one of the prettiest towns in Germany."

Erlangen lies on the Pegnitz, flowing down from Nüremberg; the country is not so rolling as that round Baireuth, but the Fichtelgebirge rise behind, on the north-east.

Very different was their visit from the perfunctory call the Margravine had paid three years previously. The objectionable Dowager had departed, after her clandestine marriage, to Vienna. The town was *en fête* to receive its new rulers, who arrived in the heavily-draped

state coach, and were received at the gates under a triumphal archway by the city notables with addresses. Between lines of their guards they rumbled down the straight streets, past the church, built some thirty years before by the Refugees, and bearing a grateful inscription to the Margrave Christian Ernst and George Frederic Charles. Then across the market place, with its red-tiled roof and dormer-windowed Rathaus, to the Schloss. Built by Wilhelmina's great-aunt Elizabeth when Margravine of Baireuth-Culmbach, it is a long, straight pile, the roof-line broken by statues, a "very handsome palace . . . to which are noble gardens," says flattering Pöllnitz. Of the interior as it was when Wilhelmina inhabited it, it is impossible now to judge, for it was gutted in the fire of 1814, and is all plain whitewash, though the proportions of the hall and stairs and saloons are fine. But the formal gardens remain much as they were when the new Margravine walked in them. Facing the castle at the end of a long avenue, the builder of the palace set up a statue of her father, the Great Elector, copied from the one Wilhelmina knew so well on the Long Bridge at Berlin. On the left-hand side of the gardens is a semicircular building, known at that period as an orangerie, one-storied, the *façade* supported at intervals by columns topped with pelicans; it was used for entertaining. Immediately below Wilhelmina's windows rose the beautiful bronze memorial fountain, erected in 1703 by the grateful Huguenots. It represents them in their long Louis XIV. coats and cocked hats, drinking from a stream flowing from a group of rough rocks, surmounted by the statue of their benefactor, Christian Ernst. A punning inscription runs as follows:

"*Ou ostex Christianissimus ejerit, Maritus Christianus revepit, cujus fontes bibimis.*"

Several days were spent at Erlangen, the Margravine "worn out with addresses." The town was even then a

[*Face page* 12, *Vol. II.*

THE CASTLE AT ERLANGEN, THE MARGRAVINE'S JOINT CAPITAL

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centre of learning, the Huguenots having brought with them sober and intellectual tastes, and not only the magistrates, and the Huguenots and Salzburgers, but the Latin School in connection with the Knights' Academy at Baireuth, sent deputations. There was a formal banquet, and the Margravine held a reception.

While the Margravial pair were at Erlangen there came an invitation from the Prince-Bishop of Bamberg-Würzburg to pay him a visit at his beautiful Palace of Pommersfeld, some sixteen miles off. Count Schönborn, formerly Imperial Chancellor, who had been rewarded for his eminent political services in the cause of the Pragmatic Sanction by the gift of the rich Prince-Bishoprics of Bamberg-Würzburg, was one to whom the Margrave owed much. But for his timely support it is doubtful if George Frederic Charles would have won over Frederic William to cancelling the agreement both their fathers had made anent the Baireuth succession.

Wilhelmina was feeling her wings. This visit, one of the dine-and-sleep order with which the German princelets of the period relieved the tedium of their somewhat monotonous existences, was her first as a reigning sovereign. It may well be imagined how she stood on her royal dignity, and how warily she trod, especially with a host of an anomalous position. Moreover "my sister of Anspach" and her Margrave, had also been invited. Wilhelmina sent on a message to Anspach to concert measures with her sister; "all the world would have their eyes upon us, and I was determined not to yield a rag of what was due to me." She proposed only to call their host "*Euer Liebden*," an untranslatable title, lower than Serene Highness, and given to bishops. But Bamberg-Würzburg, she heard secretly, had grander pretensions. Frederica of Anspach was docile as usual, and said she would follow her elder sister's suit.

Pöllnitz has not failed to leave us a description of Bamberg and Pommersfeld as it was at that time.

"The neighbourhood of Bamberg is very agreeable, but as one comes to it from Nüremberg through a certain Forest of Fir-trees, it strikes a man with Horror to find an avenue to it a quarter of a League in length, formed by Wheels and Gibbets. This at first sight gives a stranger no very great idea of the Honesty of the People; but he is of another opinion when he comes to know that these exposed Malefactors are for the most part foreigners.

"The Bishop of Bamberg is contiguous to seven or eight different States, and the Town itself lies in the greatest Road of all Germany, which is the reason that it is so infested by Rogues from all Quarters. In the time of the Elector of Maintz, Bamberg was their *Ne plus ultra*, for that Prince gave them no Quarter: Being an Enemy to Wickedness, and one of the greatest Justiciaries that we have had in Germany, he sent all to the Gallows that deserv'd Hanging.

"About a League out of the Town the Bishop has a charming Pleasure-House—but there is nothing in all Germany more magnificent than the Castle of Pommersfelden, belonging to the Count de Schönborn, which is three Leagues from Bamberg.

"Francis Lotharius de Schönborn, Elector of Maintz, caused this stately Fabric to be built, the whole of which forms a great body of building flank'd by two Pavilions with two advanc'd Wings. The whole is regularly built and decorated with well-fancy'd Architecture. The Entry is supported by several Colonades, where the first thing that presents itself is the grand Stair-case, which is extraordinary magnificent, and perhaps one of the best contrived in Europe. This Entry leads into a Salon which serves as a Passage to the Garden; this in form of a Grotto adorn'd with several Fountains, Columns, and Statues of Marble. The Ceiling is painted as well as the Sky-light of the Stair-case and the Arches of the Principal Apartments. They are all painted by Hands the Elector sent for on purpose from Italy. I don't give you the Particulars of the great Salon, nor of the Apartments, because it would take up a Volume. The whole are laid out with Art, and finish'd with great Choice, Judgment, and Splendour.

"The Stables answer exactly to the Castle, which they front. They are built in form of a Half-moon with a Pavilion in the middle, which is an oval Salon, from both Sides of which you see all the horses. The Mangers are marble, in form of Shells, and the Racks of iron neatly wrought in form of a Basket or Scuttle.

"The Salon in the middle of the two Stables is painted Fresco and looks one way to the Court, and the other to the Riding-House, where the Elector us'd to see the Horses manag'd belonging to the Studs of his Bishoprick near Bamberg, one of the best in Germany.

"The Gardens of Pommersfelden are very answerable to the Magnificence of the Buildings: In a word, everything belonging to this fine House is worthy of it.

"The Builder of it had sublime Ideas; he spared no cost to leave Monuments of his Grandeur and Wealth to Posterity, and has made a House of Pommersfelden which really surpasses some Royal Palaces.

"Pommersfelden," writes the Margravine, "is a great pile, of which the main building is detached from the wings, and is comprised of four pavilions. It is square, and when seen at a distance seems a mass of stones, the exterior is full of defects, but when you enter the courtyard the idea of this *château* changes, and one perceives an air of grandeur unnoticed before. You mount first a terrace of five or six steps, and enter a narrow and crushed door which disfigures the building."

The Bishop, with his Court, received them at the foot of "a magnificent staircase which now came in view, showing the whole height of the palace, its vault only sustained by a sort of equilibrium, and the ceiling painted in frescoes, the hand-rails of white marble adorned with statues."

He presented his sister-in-law, the wife of General Count Schönborn, and his niece, Abbess of Würzburg, who had come specially to do the honours, and he conducted the Margravine to her apartments. Hardly had she reached them and begun a polite conversation, than she perceived that Sonnsfeld was not with her. Pleading her disordered travelling attire she retired, to find Sonnsfeld, who now ranked as mistress of the robes, in a towering rage, for she had been neglected, the Countess having taken precedence of her.

The Margravine took up the cudgels. Sonnsfeld's precedence was regulated by that of her mistress. Voight was ordered to go and expostulate. "Father Difficulty," as Wilhelmina had dubbed him, because of the mountains he made out of mole-hills, came "with a face a yard long."

"'Your Royal Highness doesn't understand the consequence of the order she is giving me. We are assembled here to cement the union of the members of the Franconian Circle. Is it a time to pick a trumpery quarrel? The Bishop will take this affair very badly; he will not give up his point, and, if you hold to yours,

it will become an affair of the Empire.' I burst out laughing. 'An affair of the Empire?' I said to him. 'Very well, so much the better, ladies have never been mixed up in it, it will be something new.' The Margrave shrugged his shoulders and looked at me with an air of pity. 'But, happen what may, I beg you will let the Bishop know,' I added, 'that I like him so much that I would be sorry to annoy him, but he cannot be ignorant of the prerogatives of Kings' daughters, having been all his life brought up at Vienna; I consider myself honoured by being the wife of the Margrave, but I will not yield a jot of what belongs to me.'"

The Margrave and Voight were in a dilemma. The Bishop must be considered. Not only were the two Prince-Bishoprics the largest territories of the Franconian Circle, but they were Roman Catholic. Baireuth-Culmbach and Anspach, on the other hand, were Protestant, little lambs alone among the Roman wolves of Southern Germany. The difficulties of Frederic William with the Emperor over religious matters in the Empire called for tactful behaviour on the part of his sons-in-law. Schönborn was the Kaiser's man, till recently, the head Imperial officer. In that capacity he had tackled Prussia over knotty points, during the perpetual friction between Vienna and Prussia, the overgrown, too independent child of the Empire. After the late victories of France, consolidation and loyalty to the Kaiser were imperative on the part of all the Princes.

It was so like Wilhelmina, at that age at all events, not to grasp the political situation, but to only be full of her mere womanly ambition and her personal feelings. She acted like her mother's daughter, in whom was concentrated all Sophia Dorothea's Hanoverian pride. In later years, through bitter experience, she grew wiser.

Finally the Court officials solved the question by deciding that the bone of contention in the shape of the

Countesses should go away directly the Margravine of Anspach had been received, a solution they were doubtless loath to agree to. Frederica arrived in a delicate state of health, and not the best of tempers. She was disagreeable to her sister, accused her of making a fuss about nothing, declined to sit beside her at dinner, and the Bishop had to separate them.

Wilhelmina found her host extremely interesting. It was the first time that, in her new position, she had come into personal contact with a great statesman and politician. Though not exactly to be respected for his moral character, or for his manners, being too pedantic, his broad mind appealed to Wilhelmina. The Bishop, on his side, must have felt interested in his clever young guest, for during her visit Wilhelmina would spend hours in argument with him, talking over every possible subject. He instructed her on many points on which she was ignorant, "and I had the happiness of gaining his approbation."

It was bitterly cold weather, and the ladies kept to the house while the Bishop and the Margraves hunted all day till dusk. Wilhelmina was much bored, shut up all day with her sulky sister. When the men returned the only amusement was a serenade—bits of operas—"the music was detestable, five or six she-cats flayed our ears for four hours while we were nearly numbed, for the cold was excessive. After supper we only went to bed at three in the morning, tired as dogs from doing nothing all day."

But there was plenty to see in the Palace itself. The Margravine was already planning to build at the Ermitage, and was keenly interested in architecture. Hitherto her acquaintance with palaces was small; she knew only Berlin, Charlottenburg, Baireuth, Erlangen, and the Brandenburger. We have heard how struck she was with the stairway, though disapproving of the entrance and exterior. Later we shall see how she copied the stairway at Baireuth. This stairway leads to

a great hall paved with marble, with adjoins a salon much gilt and hung with pictures. The Margravine did not care for the arrangement of this gallery, "which looked more like a chapel, and did not show any of that noble architecture which combines taste and magnificence." But she was pleased with this her first sight of a picture-gallery. Frederic had studied art at Dresden in 1728, and had begun to collect. The Pommersfeld gallery "was of the finest," she writes, delighted with the Guido Reni and the Paul Veroneses and not doubting the Rubens, though of the nine in the catalogue of 1769 to 1794, only two are to-day thought genuine. She spent some hours in these three salons, one hung with leathern tapestry painted by Raphael, studying all the pictures.

An expedition "quite ecclesiastical," sneers Protestant Wilhelmina, was made to Bamberg to see the relics and the Cathedral, a four hours' drive. She rose at seven in the bitter morning, feeling ill and numb. Her sister was cross, and announced she was too ill to go. Wilhelmina found her, however, sitting up in bed working, and looking quite well. Persuaded to get up, she took two hours dressing. Two fine coaches were waiting, one for each Margravine. The two sisters disputed as to who was to start first, neither wishing to take precedence of the other. At last, when the horses must have been waiting hours in the cold, the Grand Chamberlain of the Bishop, a stout, big man, took Wilhelmina by the hand, and begged her to enter the first, and started her off with Sonnsfeld before she had even time to ask for her cloak. They went at a walk and were half frozen. The Margravine ordered the coachman to trot.

The grand old mediæval city of Bamberg, standing on five hills overlooking the rich valley of the Pegnitz, and the magnificently-situated cathedral with its four towers, one of the finest Romanesque buildings in Germany, probably did not appeal to the Margravine's taste, which was purely classical. If she could build copies of Roman

temples and sham ruins she was unlikely to appreciate either the Cathedral or the Gothic *Frauenkirche.* She sniffs again at the famous relics, all on show—

"a piece of the Cross in a gold frame, two of the cups from the marriage of Cana in Galilee, bones of the Virgin ,a rag of Joseph's coat, the skulls of the founders of the Cathedral, the Kaiser Frederic and his wife Cunigunde, the latter's teeth, seeming, by their length, like the weapons of a wild boar."

Probably the weather spoilt the expedition. So numb with cold was the Margravine that, when they went to dinner at the new castle on the cliff just across the Cathedral square, her ladies had to undress and rub her. She dined alone, and played trocadillo, very bored. Frederica came in to coffee, sulky. After the Bishop had put the Margravine into her coach for the return journey, Sonnsfeld explained all. The order to trot which she had given was supposed by the Anspach ladies to have been done intentionally to make her sister ill. The Margravine was furious, but treated them with silent contempt. The libel was all over the Court the next day, and the Anspach ladies were found much fault with, but their fabrications were laid to the charge of the Bishop's good wine.

On the return to Erlangen the Margravine had the misfortune to lose her little Bologna dog, who died in a good old age, deeply regretted by its mistress. A marble memorial garden-seat overlooking the Solent has been erected by a modern royal lady to "Bully, a nine years' pet." But Wilhelmina's doggie had been her companion, through weal and through woe, for nineteen years. She had shared with her the rare dainties of the meagre tables of Potsdam and Wusterhausen, had diverted the King's attention in the inkstand adventure, and had been her companion in those drear months of captivity at Berlin. She was probably the little long-haired King Charles that the Margravine is holding in her lap in the portrait in the Schloss at Berlin.

"I loved the creature," writes the Margravine sadly, "which had been the companion of all my misfortunes, and I felt her loss. Animals seem to me a sort of reasonable beings, I have seen some so clever that they only lacked speech to explain their thoughts clearly. I think Descartes' views on the subject are ridiculous. I respect the faithfulness of a dog. It seems to me that he has that advantage over humanity, which is so changeable. If I cared to go into this matter thoroughly, I wager I could prove that there is more common sense among animals than among men. But these are my memoirs I am writing, and not their praises, though this observation may serve as an epitaph for my little doggie."

It must not be supposed that the lives of the new rulers of Baireuth were entirely given over to social amusements. In 1736 the first political newspaper was started by the Margrave's wish, and a regular postal service run between Baireuth and Culmbach. A Freemason since his Geneva days, he formed a Lodge at Baireuth where only French was spoken. Another, a German Lodge, was started later. The free library planned by his late father was now opened, and in the attempts to improve education we see traces of the Margravine's hand. The stipend was taken from the Monastic school at Heilbronn, which was dissolved, and appropriated for another professorship at the Baireuth Gymnasium school.

A letter written that Christmas to Frederic showed how Wilhelmina's mind was occupied with deep questions. After the reiteration of her affection for her brother, without which not one of her letters begins or ends, it goes on with an exposition of her belief in the existence of God, the theory of atoms, and a First Cause.

"I had repented a thousand times, my dear brother, for having promised you my system concerning the existence of God; nevertheless, having no subject worth filling this letter with, I shall try at least to amuse you with my philosophy, which I submit entirely to your criticism, repeating yet again what a very inferior philosopher I count myself. These, then, are my principles. Everything is composed of atoms, some crooked, some pointed and of different shapes. These atoms having a perpetual motion, happen to meet, jostle one another, hook into each other, unite, and that is

what forms bodies. But they cannot have any movement of themselves, not being unlimited beings, but dependent one on another. As they cannot be motionless, according with principles of philosophy, it follows, therefore, that there must be an unlimited independent being who gives them movement, and, in consequence, this being is God; for, tell me, why do these atoms, happening to meet, form a person rather than a flower? It cannot be chance, or then it might have happened that everything became flowers or animals, and there would have been no persons, so it is essential to admit a first principle, necessary in all things, who, by his universal power, directs the second principles to use them for his ends."

Frederic, in his reply, objected to the idea of crooked or square atoms, as causing a void which nature abhors. His sister, anxious for an intellectual companion, had begged him to send her his former tutor, Duhan, who was living quietly at Blankenburg since his abrupt dismissal by Frederic William, and Frederic was afraid of opening up old sores.

The passing through of the Austrian troops, returning home upon the conclusion of peace, was a great strain on the countries which had to billet them, but the presence of a crowd of charming Austrian officers, with some of their equally charming wives, contributed not a little to the gaiety of the Baireuth Court.

The Margravine celebrated her husband's birthday and the conclusion of peace in May, with one of the brilliant *fêtes* which she knew so well how to arrange. In the great hall of the castle, a Mount Parnassus had been built. A new singer, dressed as Apollo, sang an ode on a stage below the Mount, accompanied by nine beautifully attired Muses, who then descended from the Mountain and danced a ballet, of which the Margrave was especially fond. A dinner of a hundred and fifty guests followed, the Margrave and Margravine and the Court all dressed to represent the gods and goddesses of mythology. All this cost money, but Ellrodt, the new secretary, was setting things in order. He found a large source of revenue which evidently the Council had kept to themselves. So the said Council was dissolved

and reconstructed. Ellrodt also discovered a number of debts outstanding from time immemorial, which he got paid up, and for the first time in her life the Margravine felt herself rich.

About this time two marriages occurred which were indirectly of interest to Wilhelmina. One was that of the Emperor's daughter, Maria Theresa, with Duke Francis of Lorraine, and the other of Frederic, Prince of Wales. There is a suspicious trace of jealousy in the curt, and not very accurate description of the bride, a Princess of Saxe-Gotha. "It was the King, his father, who made the marriage, in which the heart of the Prince had no part, for the Princess is neither pretty nor clever, but he was very happy with her. I return to what concerns me." With which England is dismissed for ever from Wilhelmina's thoughts, which it had once so completely filled.

The Margrave fell ill that summer, during the heat, which was spent at the Brandenburger Palace. His wife grew anxious: "There is no perfect happiness in the world. I enjoyed all I could possibly wish for, but my fears for a health so precious made all my other subjects of satisfaction vanish."

Directly he recovered the Margrave went on a visit to Denmark to see his aunt about money matters. She had promised to repay her dowry fourfold. But he not only did not succeed in securing any money, but what was worse, got into disgrace with the King by not waiting to see him *en route*, at Halberstadt, where he was expected. Frederic was also not best pleased at the Margrave's want of attention; "I doubt much of all the advantages the Margrave may gain from the King of Denmark, he will not have any to equal those he has received from the King, namely, the possession of a wife, of which he could not find one to resemble her in all the world."

Wilhelmina was hurt. She was always so sensitive to praise or blame from Frederic. But she wrote him the

dearest little letter of thanks in return for his birthday greetings and his presents.

"*July* 3, 1736.

"My dearest Brother,

"Though I have only just put my nose into the world, my little memory has first made me remember that I had a brother who was dearer to me than life, and I thought I could not do better than begin my entrance into this region than by assuring him that, though a child (though of twenty-seven years), I am always finding in my heart more affection for him than for all the universe together. I hope, therefore, that this proof I give you of my discernment will give you a good opinion of my success, and will lead to a continuation of reciprocity on your part. I beg you, therefore, dearest brother, to keep for me a little corner in your kindnesses, and to rest assured that, at whatever age, and in whatever time I may find myself, I shall be for ever, with all the affection and imaginable esteem, my dearest brother, &c., &c."

The Margravine passed the time of her husband's absence quietly at the Brandenburger, amid the congenial society she had collected round her, reading, philosophising, making music. Frederic had sent her the first violin of his Rheinsberg Orchestra. The only cloud was Fräulein von Grumbkow's pronounced flirtation with Westerhagen, the gentleman-usher, a married man. She behaved badly to the Margravine when the latter attempted to remonstrate with her, and quarrelled with Dorothea von Marwitz, of whom she was jealous.

The Margrave returned, loaded with kindnesses and honours by his aunt, but having failed in his object. The following year his clever grandmother, who had always lived at her daughter's Court, died, and his claim with Denmark was weakened.

To celebrate his return the Margravine kept her birthday by a brilliant but belated "Lake *fête*" at the Brandenburger. It was the first since their succession, owing to the Court mourning of the preceding year. The gardens at the Brandenburger were all illuminated. A theatre had been arranged, of which the wings were formed by large linden-trees. Diana and her nymphs appeared upon the stage; there was

singing and a ballet, Diana drawn round the stage in her car by two live stags. A magnificent display of fireworks followed. The beds of the gardens were outlined with different coloured lamps, and the tent where the Royalties sat glowed like a ball of fire. After dinner, served there, was a display of forty-eight allegorical pictures in gilt frames. France was represented as a Frenchwoman dressed in a gown strewn with lilies, and surmounted by the only too appropriate motto :

> "Of France, the language, wit, and grace,
> Holds in our Court the foremost place."

After that, the town of Baireuth, represented by a woman dressed in old Franconian costume, with the town escutcheon in her hand, seemed flat and uninteresting.

The next day the Court moved to the Ermitage. The Margravine resuscitated the old make-believe of monks and nuns, but her monastic community were philosophers, who argued serious subjects. Frederic wrote jokingly that the philosophers were as make-believe as the brethren, yet he longed to be with her. Would she not keep him a vacant cell near hers, for his heart ?

The end of the year witnessed the fall of the Margravine's old enemy, Seckendorff. As Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial army in the war against the Turks, Seckendorff failed so signally that he was tried by court-martial, and imprisoned at Spielberg. But the Margravine, on whom life was now smiling, bids adieu in her Memoirs to the cause of so much sorrow to her and hers with a kind word.

The Prince-Bishop now paid his return visit. Thanks to the improvements the Margravine had made in the interior arrangement of the Castle, to some valuable additions to her orchestra and choir, and to the presence of several foreigners, who gave her Court a *cachet,* the visit was a great success. Various amusements and

festivities took place in his honour; among others the performances of the celebrated Polish conjurer, Fillig, legerdemain being a new thing in those days and regarded with awe. But there came grumbles from Berlin over the attentions showered upon the interesting ecclesiastic; Frederic William was always on his guard against Austria, and Frederic also gave Wilhelmina a hint, which he softened by a Christmas present for the Ermitage. His sister returned it by sending him a clock.

The year 1737 was marked by several alterations in the Government. The better to curb the too independent Council, the Margrave instituted a Privy Council, and influenced, probably, by his contact with the broad-minded Bishop, issued orders encouraging his Protestant clergy to study, and to scientific research. Schmidt, a young divinity student whose oratory pleased the Margravine, was sent to a foreign university.

The two clever Ränz brothers, sons of the old sculptor, went to study art in Italy. The Margrave began to improve the town. The cavalry barracks by the river date from this year. Nor were the country districts neglected. His love of shooting led him all over the land, and he never lost his country tastes. Orders concerning forestry were issued, both to peasant and to burgher.

In the spring a pastoral opera was performed in the gardens at Erlangen, at which the Margravine's new singer, the famous Zaghini, made his *début*. But amusements were suddenly put a stop to by a sad event, which called the Margravine to Anspach.

But a short time before Frederica had been begging her father for his Order of the Black Eagle for the little four-year-old heir. Now the child was beyond the reach of any earthly decorations. It was a sad blow to his mother, for he was the only joy of her wretched married life. The Margrave blamed her for neglect and for his son's death, and for three weeks had practically

made a prisoner of her, and was threatening a divorce. On a hint of the state of affairs Wilhelmina hurried off to Anspach. She found her sister inconsolable. The Margrave, very sulky, arrived to meet her from the country cottage where his mistress, the kitchen-maid, resided. The relations between husband and wife were so strained that they would not speak at dinner. Seckendorff, the chamberlain, fomented the quarrel. It took all Wilhelmina's tact and strength of mind to reduce first him, and then the Margrave, to submission, and to reconcile the injured wife. Finally, however, "over the grave of a little child, they kissed again with tears," so Wilhelmina went home well satisfied with her work.

CHAPTER II

A RHINELAND TRIP

The Margravine makes a "cure" at Ems, and an architectural tour. Her ill-health. Mismanaged by the doctors. The arrival of Supperville.

The Margravine's health had improved very much during the past year, but the country was anxious for an heir. It was suggested to her to try a "cure" at a watering place. She disliked the notion, feeling persuaded that it would not suit her, but the doctor, who had been bribed, insisted, and the Margravine chose Ems as the mildest waters in Germany.

They set off in the summer of 1737, after her return from Anspach, travelling by coach across to the pretty little old "Residenz" town of Wertheim. Here they took boat and had a delightful six days' journey down the Main and the Rhine, and up the Lahn to Ems. They were a pleasant party, the food was good, and the kaleidoscope of beautiful views and the attractive sites delighted the Margravine, both as an artist and landscape gardener. For the first time she saw a river larger than her native Spree, or the Red and White Mains. It is difficult for us, in these days when everyone travels, to realise how circumscribed were some of the great ones of the earth at that time. But travelling in the heat always seems to have made the Margravine ill, and she arrived tired and harassed at

Ems after the last night in a small boat which could get up the Lahn, and in which sleep was impossible.

Ems was an old, old bath even in Wilhelmina's time. It dates from Roman days, and has been frequented since 1354. But when she saw it, it consisted only of a few lodging houses by the side of the stream. From the bridge one could see the dominions of eight different independent princes, a striking illustration of the superabundance of potentates and of Courts, of which, in the eighteenth century, the Holy Roman Empire consisted—some three hundred.

The Baireuth Court put up at the Hotel Orange. The Margravine did not like Ems. In August the narrow, shadeless valley of the Lahn is hot and stuffy, and Wilhelmina did not appreciate country life. The compulsory walk along the river banks in a muddy promenade shaded by lime-trees, and frequented by pigs and other domestic animals, which had to be driven out of the path at each turn by the visitors, was not to her mind. There were no plays or concerts, and she found the society boring. A Madame de Harrenburg, wife of an English Court official, was its Queen, an ugly, affected little woman, accompanied by husband and lover. To amuse themselves, the Margrave, on whose hands time doubtless hung heavy, pretended to fall in love with this fair one. The lady fell into the trap and "wished to begin the novel where it is finished." The Margrave, however, was not of the same mind, and so the "creature" turned on the Margravine for putting, as she thought, a spoke in her wheel. But the latter was not a penny the worse for her displeasure.

Happily Pöllnitz, always a host in himself, and doubtless attracted by the Margravine's presence, arrived upon the scene, bringing with him some agreeable company, and also all the gossip from Berlin. He was quite in the King's good graces, having recently changed his religion, and turned Protestant for the second time.

He reported from Berlin that everyone pitied the Margravine, that the King could not say enough against the Margrave, as the latter was said to be behaving very badly to his wife and to be keeping mistresses. Wilhelmina indignantly denied the rumours and begged Pöllnitz to do the same to the King. But in view of the facts which were so soon to come to light, one cannot help thinking that Pöllnitz, who was nothing if not versed in Court life and character, was perhaps better informed than the Margravine.

At first the waters suited her. Zeitz, her doctor, whom she had brought, and who seems persistently to have either misunderstood or mismanaged her health, and who had only one object in view, even at the cost of the Margravine's life, tried to force the hottest baths upon her. But she had the good sense not to yield.

The "cure" finished, the Baireuth Court went down the Lahn to Coblenz on August 15th to see the procession of the Corpus Christi. Wilhelmina had more taste for Roman Catholicism than her family or her husband. Loving shows, and herself an impresario, the religious *fêtes* of the Church always appealed to her. Coblenz and the castle made no impression on her. On her return to Ems she found an usher of the Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt with a polite invitation to break the journey at "Münchenbrück," and pay him a visit at his hunting-box near Frankfürt.

Driving over the Taunus Hills by Schlangenbad and Schwalbach, now crowded with summer visitors, they slept at Wiesbaden. Here they found awaiting them two Counts of Reuss. It is only when the Margravine depicts such princelets, and the manners, customs, and conversations of the other little German Courts she visits, that one is able to appreciate how much she did for that of Baireuth, in raising its moral tone, and in imbuing it with a taste for art and intelligence. The first of these gentlemen

"did nothing but jump from one leg to the other, saying that he was an Imperial Chamberlain, and a reigning Count of the Empire. 'I am charmed, Monsieur,' I replied; 'if the Emperor has many Chamberlains equal to you, his Court must be well furnished.' He agreed with me. The other told me that he was living on one of his estates near Frankfürt because the forage was much better, and that all his joy was in having fine horses, and went on to give me the number, the genealogy of all the inhabitants of his stable. I could have told him that they were probably less animal than himself. At last I got into my coach, in order to get rid of the jumpy and the horsey Count, and arrived at Münchbrück in a great heat and unbearable dust."

It consisted of several little detached houses, each containing a small salon and three little rooms, furnished with many coloured damasks with gold and silver galoons. The white-headed old Landgrave received the travellers at the door of the coach and led the Margravine into the courtyard without a word. Though eighty years of age, he did not look more than fifty; he had a cancer in his mouth, which gave him a repulsive appearance. His dissipated life, and his wild hunts after the Philosopher's Stone, had almost ruined his country, which was in a very bad way, and he was living on bad terms with his son.

He treated the latter, who was nearly fifty, like a child, and his natural ability and good manners had been quite deteriorated by the low society in which he moved. He was waiting in the courtyard with his sister, the Princess Maximilian, of Hesse-Cassel, a bold-looking woman of coarse manners and conversation. If the old Landgrave was monosyllabic, and his son could do nothing but bow, the Margravine soon found that she could have well dispensed with the conversation of the daughter. Accustomed to the bright and sparkling talk of an age when cultivated people made an art of conversation, the weariness of the dinner that followed may well be imagined. The only amusement was the rolling up of the damask hangings to reveal others beneath them, painted in oil colours, which was evidently considered by her host as something quite supernatural.

When the meal was over she was forced to dance. As there were only three ladies and many *Allemandes* were danced, the Margravine was quite knocked up. In response to her entreaties the Margrave allowed her to get off again at seven in the evening, and they reached Frankfürt very late, announced by salvoes of cannon, and received by the magistrates and councillors.

The Margravine rested a day at Frankfürt, not feeling well, but saw all the sights. To avoid the great heat they started again on their journey at five in the morning, determined to travel all night. But though she was ill, the Margravine's mind was so full of her building plans that she insisted upon turning aside about ten miles out of Frankfürt to see Phillipsruhe, the new palace Prince William of Hesse had lately built on the Main. She admired the situation, the beautiful gardens, the exquisite views of soft landscapes across the river, such as she loved; the palace itself, though large and fine, was too simple interiorly to please her; perhaps it was hardly finished. Wilhelmina's great taste lay, as we shall see, in interior decoration.

The Main being too low for boats, the journey continued by road. Their way lay through "the gloomy forest of Spessart," even now one of the largest forest districts of Germany. It passed over densely-wooded hills, through lonely valleys, hardly a house to be seen. "The roads were awful." In addition to the usual perturbation of mind which mountain travelling always caused the Margravine, she now became quite ill, the result of a chill after the great heat. In the loneliest part of the road a violent thunderstorm, with heavy rain, came on, and the temperature fell much during the night.

More dead than alive was the Margravine when at dawn they reached the miserable little village of Eselsbach. Unconscious, she was lifted out of the coach, and laid upon a bed. The doctor who had come up thought badly of her. To the dysentery had succeeded fever. Rest was imperative, but the accommodation was so

wretched that, when she rallied a little next day, they pushed on to Würzburg for a visit to Bishop Schönborn.

When the coach had rumbled through the gates the illustrious travellers found that the narrow streets, overhung with gables, were lined with episcopal troops. With the triple discharge of cannon which greeted them the Margravine, in her present state, would probably willingly have dispensed. Their host and his court received them at the front of the magnificent and original stairway. But the shaking of the coach had so weakened her that she had at once to retire to bed.

Later, however, her will triumphed, as usual, over her frail body, and she dragged herself round the Versailles of Germany, the finest of all the palaces she calls it, equalled by few, surpassed by none. It is the work of a German architect, John Balthazar Neuman, who built it for the Bishop preceding Wilhelmina's host, also a Schönborn, and it was only recently finished when she stayed there. Especially did she admire the stairway, and those of the two hundred and eighty-four rooms she had strength to explore. But she could hardly have penetrated into the great cellars, containing the largest tun in Germany, holding four hundred and twenty thousand gallons, nor could she have walked much in the beautiful gardens which surrounded the palace on three sides. The interior decorations, however, she "thought detestable," but they were hardly finished and did not contain the Gobelins tapestry and the Emperor's mirrors which we see now.

At eight in the evening the travellers started on the last stage of their journey, the Margravine speechless from a severe cold. Travelling all night they reached Erlangen next day, and there they rested a fortnight till she was in better health.

Fired by the architectural beauty she had seen, the Margravine set to work on her return to Baireuth on the Ermitage. Frederic was busy in his garden at Rheinsberg, and their two minds ever reacted telepathically

on each other. So engrossed in her work did the Margravine become that her brother begged her "not to metamorphose herself into stone, *you* would lose too much, and that mind I love, and that all the world admires, is so well lodged in your body that it would be a sin to drive it out."

The Margrave's serious illness early in 1738, an alarming apoplectic seizure, threw his devoted wife's health back. He recovered, "his convalescence giving me back my life, for what have I not suffered during his illness," but the doctors sent from Berlin in consequence of the bad report of her husband and Sonnsfeld, came to the conclusion that they could do nothing for Wilhelmina. Frederic then remembered the clever doctor who had done so much for the King, and "wrote me a most affectionate letter."

"I am delighted to hear that the health of the Margrave is quite re-established. I know you, my dear sister, how anxious you will have been all this time, and that you will have made yourself ill. I spoke to a clever doctor about your illness; his name is Supperville, von Grumbkow should know him. He has assured me that he can cure you if you send for him. I beg you to write to the King for permission for him to come to you; for I am nearly sure that he will set you up. I hope that you have affection enough for me to listen to what I beg of you. The love I have for you, and the true affection which you have always found in me, is too much concerned in preserving you to neglect giving you advice which I think beneficial."

Wilhelmina was in the lowest spirits, and had made up her mind to die. Only the grief that her loss would cause her husband pained her, but she tried to stifle that by recalling how so many husbands, after having "*fait les désespérés*," consoled themselves in the end. But the Margrave and Frederic's entreaties prevailed.

A touching letter to the King (accompanied by a present of two fine recruits) depicting her sad condition and asking his pardon and blessing, had the desired effect. The new doctor arrived at the Ermitage.

"I expected to see one of those pedants, noble pillars of the faculty, who spit Latin at you with every word they say, and

whose diffuse and boring arguments go far to make the sick people die before their time.

"Not at all; I saw a man come in of rather good appearance, who addressed me with an air of being used to good society, and, in a word, did not show the slightest taint of his trade."

Both Wilhelmina and her brother were medically minded, and diagnosed their own and other people's ailments with considerable minuteness. But for doctors themselves they had hitherto had a great contempt, their experience of them not having been lucky. In Wilhelmina's girlhood Holzendorff, the King's surgeon, and Stahl, the Queen's, had been mere instruments of Court intrigue first, and very inferior medicos afterwards. The late Margrave's doctor, Görkel, had not been able to distinguish, as we have seen, between blood and some other red liquid, in the case which arose at Prince William's funeral. He had a theory that, as a corpse was preserved by being embalmed, so, if he could succeed in embalming a living person, they might live for centuries. As the best preservative against consumption was pine cones, he suggested a cure of pine baths for the old Margrave and his daughter-in-law, "to mummify them," as she puts it. Her own doctor, "*ignorantus, ignorantium, ignorantissimi*," bled and purged her so before her confinement that it was a marvel that she pulled through at all. It was owing to Stahl that her life, and that of her child, were saved; he was good at research, but not much of a physician. "He was of opinion that when the soul found itself embarrassed by too great an affluence of matter it threw it off by causing salutary illness of the body, that epidemics and dangerous illnesses only proved the feebleness of the soul, which had not strength to throw off this matter, which injured it, and often brought about death. Following up this argument he only used two kinds of remedies for all diseases—cooling powders and pills." Both Stahl and Frederic's doctor, at her visit to Berlin, decided that the

Margravine had a tumour in the stomach, and would not live a year. Zeitz, who replaced Görkel, was rather cleverer, but a man of bad character, and of no religion.

He and Juch of Anspach, who was called in consultation, totally disagreed as to her chance of recovery. When in doubt, they one and all seem to have prescribed a course of the different mineral waters with which their land has been bountifully blessed, and in the Margravine's case, seemed to have prescribed the wrong ones.

The new arrival, Daniel de Supperville, was the son of a French Refugee, and born at Rotterdam. The Margrave thus describes his life :—

"Supperville is of French origin and aspires to be of good family. I will not enter into discussion of his genealogy, as any Frenchman who has settled in a foreign country is as noble as the King, although his god-father has been a butler or footman in Paris. But let that be as it may, all are not of noble birth who deserve to be, and this man had talents which could have raised him to a very high position, if an unbounded ambition had not hindered it. Supperville had studied at the University of Leyden, and Utrecht, as his father had settled at the Hague. Having taken his degree in law, he was appointed secretary of embassy to a minister who was to go to France. But love made him a doctor. Having fallen in love with a rich girl, and not feeling able to part from her, he had embraced a profession for which he felt an extreme repugnance. He went back to the University. His devotion to the study of physic and anatomy soon made him famous. The King invited him to enter his service as the first doctor in Pomerania, where his fame soon spread. He has much *esprit*, is very widely read, and may be considered a great genius ; his conversation is easy and agreeable ; he can be both serious and merry, but his overbearingness and jealousy obscure these qualities and talents, and make him appear in a ridiculous light, from which it will be difficult for him to clear himself."

Such a man was a godsend to the Baireuth Court, and not only as a doctor. The Margravine had much improved its tone ; drunkenness had vanished. But it was not yet what she wished. Society was still quite provincial and purely sporting ; nothing was

talked but hunting and farming, no one had travelled outside Baireuth, no one read anything, or had any intellectual tastes. Von Voight, a mainstay, had now become canting and boring. So the advent of Supperville was a great joy. Both the Margrave and Margravine liked him, and Supperville became devoted to them. In a measure, his treatment of the latter was successful, and her hectic fever passed off. They much wished to retain him permanently, and Supperville was anxious to remain, for he gave a poor account of Frederic morally while fully doing justice to his ability. He felt, he told the Margravine, that the Prince would only pick his brains and then cast him aside. This account distressed the sister.

"For the love of God," wrote Frederic to her, "persuade your Margrave to make up his mind to send those two men to the King's guard, in order that you may have Supperville. It is, I swear to you, the only means of succeeding, as no one has any hope of helping you if the mediation of tall men is not added. You should not lose any time; moments are precious and yourself invaluable. I beg of you to follow my advice and not to found too many hopes on Denmark; those things are always deceptive."

The King, thus appealed to, consented, but for the present only, to allow Supperville to come and go, in order to supervise Wilhelmina's health.

A further alleviation in the Margravine's condition was the marriage of Fräulein von Grumbkow—*l'enfant de Casubie*, Frederic called her—to a widower with four children; the Margravine, delighted to be rid of her, took Albertine von Marwitz, of whom she was very fond, in her place.

In the autumn Frederic lent her Quantz again, and sent with him a charming letter.

"Remusberg, 23*rd Nov.*, 1738.

"My dearest Sister,

I cannot possibly let Quantz go without assuring you of my tender affection. I should envy him very much the happiness he will have of paying his respects to you if I did not flatter myself with some vague, and perhaps chimerical hope of seeing you again.

I wish that Quantz's flute, which speaks so very much better than he does, could tell you by its most sonorous, most touching tones, and by its most pathetical adagios, all that my heart thinks and suggests to me about you. If you feel yourself touched by the tones which subdue our emotions, think for awhile of the affection and of all that I would tell you on the subject, were I happy enough to be able to talk to you. The fire of the allegros is the lively emblem of the joy which would ensue the moment I were with you."

The management of the Margravine's orchestra and singers was no easy task. That winter there was a regular revolt among them, and Frederic wrote commiseratingly that he also "expected a mutiny among his children of Euterpe. This species of people is very difficult to manage, and demands often more tact than the conduct of States." Yet tact, as we have seen, was one of Wilhelmina's strong points.

In the spring Supperville came back, and tried a new cure on Wilhelmina which seemed to improve her health, at least for the present. He found Baireuth in a ferment over the trial of Ellrodt, who had been promoted from Secretary to the late Margrave to Finance Minister, and placed in a position of great trust. The other ministers were jealous, and presented a petition against proceedings which clipped their wings. But the Margrave continued to trust Ellrodt till secret information reached him that there were arrears of pay. Ellrodt, who seemed always able to find money, had, indeed, rendered important service to the Margrave in furnishing the necessary for all the buildings, improvements, and *fêtes*, and for the numerous courtiers and dependants who had increased so enormously since his accession. But yet he did not seem to put any real order into the finances, though, when confronted with the accusation, he denied utterly that there was any peculation.

On Supperville's suggestion a Berlin accountant, one Hartmann, a man of undeniable probity and ability, was sent for, and made Director of the Finance Chamber. He found the finances in a terrible mess, and warned

the Margravine against Ellrodt's inroads and bad management. Public opinion burst out against the latter. He was accused of selling the taxes to the highest bidder, and of bleeding the people. The Margrave was dreadfully upset. He consulted his wife. After mature deliberation, and a private investigation of the denouncers, the charge against Ellrodt was drawn up in writing. But he had many friends.

Hartmann, on the other hand, had many enemies, especially among the official class, in consequence of the new regulations he had introduced. He protested his innocence, and begged for a complete investigation. In reply to his entreaty the Margrave appointed four commissioners to inquire into the case. Ellrodt "came out as white as snow," and his antagonist was sent to the fortress at Plassenburg.

The Margrave was feeling his feet now as a ruler. He was also, as we have seen, feeling the want of income to meet his increased expenditure. The best way was an increase of territory, and he actually had the audacity to enrol himself among the claimants for Julich-Berg in virtue of his Brandenburg descent. Behind the Margrave doubtless stood his wife. Sophia Dorothea's daughter had her full share of her mother's ambition. But his "so-called pretensions" were sharply nipped in the bud by Frederic, who wrote very decidedly to Wilhelmina that he was much mortified that the Margrave should have written thus to the King. It was rather late in the day to start claims, and, to speak the truth, to make any show of them it would be necessary to have money and troops like the King. "As a brother and friend," Frederic advised Wilhelmina to use her influence with the Margrave to make him withdraw, "or he would have the King on his back." Needless to say, when Frederic took this tone, the future King speaking through the brother, his sister needed no second monition, and we hear no more of the Margrave's claims to the ever debatable Duchies.

The spring of 1739 saw the vanishing of Wilhelmina's other old enemy, Grumbkow, *the Cassubien,* "whose memory," writes Frederic to her on the day after the funeral, "is generally execrated. I gain I do not know how much advantage out of his death, and I trust we shall now breathe again after a long storm." He sent her verses, "the work," as he satirically put it, "of the heart rather than of the mind."

"Ci git un maréchal, un ministre, et, de plus,
Un grand financier, un ecclésiastique,
Passants, qui connaissez sa fourbe politique,
Laissez dans l'oublie confondu
Et ses vices et ses vertus."

But Wilhelmina had long since been out of reach of Grumbkow's *fourberies*—he had struck her once, and for all.

CHAPTER III

FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE "GREEN-EYED MONSTER"

Ordered south.—An interrupted birthday.—Wilhelmina discovers her husband's fancy for Dorothea.—A mischief-maker.—Throwing dust in Frederic's eyes.—Peace with Dorothea.—A hard winter, but a gay one.—The rise of theatrical performances.—Frederic William's illness and death.

Dr. Supperville suggested that at this time a winter spent in a southern climate would benefit the Margravine's health. Both Wilhelmina and her husband were charmed with the idea. If the journey were *incognito* it would be economical, as Court expenses at home would be curtailed, and, in any case, the country would pay the travelling outlay. But Montpellier, the place suggested, then the great southern health resort, as the Riviera is with us, did not appeal to Wilhelmina. The old Margrave had spent the winter there in 1728–29, and had not given a good account of it. So she broached the idea that, after spending a few months at Antibes, they should go on to Italy. But as there would be great difficulties raised at Berlin, even over the Montpellier project, they determined to keep the further trip secret for the present.

In order to bring the King round to their views, the Margrave started with a present of eight tall men he had selected from his own guard, and bearing a beautiful clock as a present from his wife to Frederic. He

surprised Frederic William on parade, and the King, now softened by increasing age and infirmities, welcomed him most affectionately. Everything asked for was granted —the leave to go to Montpellier, permission to retain Supperville for good and all. The King sent the Margravine a gold snuff-box with his portrait set in diamonds, worth 4,000 crowns, and after a six weeks' stay the Margrave returned, loaded with presents for Wilhelmina from her father and mother. Frederic wrote her a birthday letter, saying nice things about the Margrave's arrival, and thanking her for the clock.

"But I need nothing in the world to remind me of you, my heart tells me more than all the clocks that I have a lovable sister who deserves to be loved and petted. The length of your absence makes us feel the burden of it; yesterday we kept the Anniversary of the happy day of your birth."

"Ce jour où pour vous la nature
Parut épuiser ses faveurs
Où de la vertu la plus pure
Minerve composa vos mœurs
Où les Agréments, le génie,
L'esprit, et les heureux talents,
Répandirent sur votre vie
Leurs plus magnifiques présents."

This day on which I set so much count, seemed to me more beautiful and more serene than all the others; it seemed to me that the favours of heaven, not content with having given you to our family, wished to still more distinguish this day with the most beautiful ornaments of Nature, with brilliant sun, whose rays seemed more penetrating than your wit, with a calm sky, whose purity resembles the purity of your heart, with a mild and soft air, whose beneficent influence seemed to remind us of the kindness of your character, and the loftiness of your beautiful soul."

Thus at last, after some grumblings on the part of the country, all difficulties were surmounted and the departure fixed for August 20th. The only cloud was that Sonnsfeld was too old to undertake such a long journey, as was also the Margravine's other faithful companion, Mermann. The latter's health was failing. Her husband, a man of business, a violent tempered man

who rode rough-shod over his wife, and who was annoyed at not being taken. He asked for leave to go to Berlin during his mistress's absence ; unfortunately, as will be seen, she granted it.

With many tears she parted with her two friends, and got into her coach with Flora von Sonnsfeld and Dorothea von Marwitz. Hardly had they gone a few miles when the Margrave was seized with sudden illness and high fever. They thought it was only a passing indisposition and pushed on, though he was very ill all through the night, to Erlangen. There they found Supperville. He, too, was ill, much in the same way as the Margrave. The latter grew very much worse, and his wife found it might turn from an intermittent to a malignant fever. Ill though she was herself, she sat up with him night and day. No remedy seemed to lower his temperature, and Wilhelmina, anxious and alarmed, rushed herself off to Supperville, begging for him to be bled. But the other doctor, Wagner, declined to do it except as a last resource, and Supperville gave way.

At 3 a.m. Wilhelmina, worn out with anxiety and fatigue, had gone to lie down. She had only slept a few hours when Wagner suddenly appeared at her bedside, saying they had decided to bleed him.

She arose, more dead than alive, believing her husband at the last gasp, and dragged herself to his room. All the Privy Councillors had assembled, the people had gathered in the streets, remonstrating against Supperville's bleeding, and trying to prevent the surgeon from coming in. Supperville, as bad as the Margrave, did not lose his head, however, and had himself bled first, which calmed the people a little.

Wilhelmina lay in an armchair in a state impossible to describe. What was her joy to notice a change in the beloved face as the blood began to flow. The fever did not return at the usual time, and that evening the Margrave was out of danger.

But with the Margrave's convalescence a new bitterness was now added to Wilhelmina's cup, a bitterness she never expected to taste. For the first time the trail of the "green-eyed monster" swept over her life. Wilhelmina was no longer in her first youth; ill-health and suffering had diminished her physical charms. To judge by the Berlin portrait, with the dog in her arms, her music-books by her side, and dressed in a scallop-shell trimmed black velvet gown, her form was emaciated, and her cheeks, below the close, white, curly wig, hollow and hectic. The lustre of her large, fine eyes, the beautiful lines of her clever, satirical mouth, indeed betray the brilliant spirit within. But the pleasure-loving Margrave, a man, as we know, of "too much fickleness," who preferred bowls to philosophy, and ballets to Voltairian tragedy, and in whom Frederic had early detected a taste for flirtation, was unlikely to fully appreciate, as Voltaire put it, "in the decay of her beauty, the dawn of her intellect." The raw hoyden Wilhelmina had brought from Berlin eight years before, and had taken a delight in training in mind and body, was now in the heyday of her youth, and of a beauty which, to judge from the picture of the Ermitage, must have been great. Dorothea von Marwitz turned and stung the hand which fed her.

But let Wilhelmina tell her own miserable story.

"But as his health improved, I noticed that he was extremely cold towards me. He found fault with everything that I did. On the other hand, he made a thousand advances to the Marwitz, asking after her every moment when she was not in his room. He did blindly all she wished when it was a question of taking care of his health, and snubbed me when I gave him the same advice. This put me into a state of despair. My body soon suffered from my mental trouble. I had attacks such as I had never had yet, sort of convulsions with violent headache. My *Gouvernante* came to be with me. She did what she could to comfort me, but no one could guess the cause of my illness.

"I have already said that the little room in which I slept opened into the Margrave's chamber. I heard him every morning, directly he woke up, asking for the ladies. When I was well enough to go

to him he hardly spoke to me, and sent at once for the Marwitz. A horrible jealousy seized my heart. Everyone could see how troubled I was, but I took care not to say what caused it. I knew the Marwitz, that she was devoted to me, and that she was virtuous. I was positive that, if she became aware of the cause of my depression, she would leave the Court. But I could not forgive the Margrave for his change towards me. I had been blind for a year past, and I had not noticed a thousand little things which were now obvious.

"The Margrave was still inclined to go on with the Italian journey. But my wish for it was quite gone. I foresaw that the opportunities which he would have to see the Marwitz more often would only increase his love; besides, my heart was now too sad to find pleasure in anything but an alleviation of my situation."

On the top of this came fresh worries from Berlin. Mermann had been making mischief, spreading libels about Wilhelmina and incensing the King and Queen against her. In vain his faithful wife said what she could do on the other side. Mermann was believed; the Queen and King always listened to servants' gossip. An angry letter came from the Queen to say the King would never forgive Wilhelmina if she went to Montpellier; Frederic reported that Sonnsfeld had written urging that the Margrave should be persuaded from the journey. On the other hand, Frederic advised her to stick to her plans, and to go at least to Montpellier, without paying any attention to what some idiot of an inhabitant of Berlin said, or of *Sonsine* screaming like a flayed cat because she was not to go, and so crying down the journey. These variablenesses of the King's were very frequent now; had she forgotten the "*train de Berlin*" seven years ago? But he conjured her to recall and punish Mermann, who had behaved abominably.

Now what course did Wilhelmina pursue? In her Memoirs she tells how fond she was of her old nurse, and feared that the Margrave would take Frederic's view as to the husband's conduct. Sonnsfeld, as so often before, came to the rescue, and induced the

Margravine to forgive the fellow. So Wilhelmina went diametrically against her brother's advice, not only about the steward, but also as to abandoning the journey. The summer was too far advanced, she writes, and when the Margrave had sufficiently recovered, they returned to their capital amid great demonstrations of joy.

Frederic, annoyed, wrote her a sharp letter. She excused herself to him by an account of her husband's health, and her love for her old servant. But these reasons hardly satisfied Frederic, and his sister writes that she noticed a coldness in his letters. What could have induced her to incur coldness from Frederic ?

Simply this. She feared that Mermann, if dismissed with ignominy, would report at Berlin the affair of the Marwitz. Wilhelmina's pride and *amour propre* had been deeply wounded, her heart lacerated. Once beautiful, and still charming, attractive, and brilliant, she could not endure that the world should know that she had been neglected for a younger woman. Her jealousy overpowered even her love for her brother. Rather than have its cause brought to light she risked Frederic's displeasure.

In a long letter, full of tearful smoothing down, she asks Frederic's forgiveness, and gives half-a-dozen reasons for her action, and another half-dozen for giving up her journey—Montpellier was dull and cold, whereas at Naples there "reigns an eternal summer." To keep *incognito* would have been impossible ; without it, expensive. Next year they will go ; Sonnsfeld wished her to go for her health's sake.

Sonnsfeld had interfered. Having succeeded in staving off this journey, which might have been so fatal, she now tried to bring about peace, or, at all events, a hollow truce. Which it was can only be known to the Margravine and Dorothea. Proud Wilhelmina persevered in her ostrich-like policy, proclaiming reconciliation.

"Madame de Sonnsfeld surprised me several times in tears. By dint of her entreaties she wrung from me that my sorrow was only caused by the Margrave's change towards me. The Marwitz had also noticed that I was not in my usual temper, but thought that my health had to do with it. My *Gouvernante* could not help talking to her of my trouble.

"The Marwitz, I fancy, guessed the cause. She was so upset about it that she fell ill with fever. But Madame de Sonnsfeld noticed that my complaints were indeed not ill founded, and that the Margrave was very cold to me. She spoke to him very sharply, and her sermon bore fruit. The Margrave made excuses to me, and laid it down to his fever. In reality, I soon found him as affectionate again as in the past. On the other hand, I trusted the Marwitz so much that I quite put any ideas she might have got out of her head."

The Margravine must have regretted that she had not gone south, for the winter of 1739–40 was a very cold one. It began at Martinmas, and did not end till the middle of May. The people suffered dreadfully. In Berlin the sick King ordered his stores of grain reserved for emergencies to be opened. Even in more southerly Baireuth people were frozen and starved to death, and others reduced to fearful straits; an old woman who could no longer support herself and her grandson by begging, offered him to a Jew for sale. A couple who had sold every stick they possessed, brought their hair to market. But, as no one wished to buy it, they had to go round bald and clad in rags, begging alms at every door.

With the new year came worse accounts of the King's health. But he moved up to Berlin and tried to keep Carnival as usual. At Baireuth the festive season was very gay. Wilhelmina was happy again, and living in perfect peace. "The Margrave behaving very well to me, and with the Marwitz I enjoyed all the delights of friendship."

There were fancy balls at the Castle, but not masquerades, out of deference to the pietists. Their head, the Margrave's canting chaplain, Schmidt, was in favour with the Court of Denmark, "which was as dull as a monastery," and, for financial reasons, it was

unwise to offend him. Gradually the Margravine and the Margrave began to teach the people how to amuse themselves, chiefly by the introduction of French comedies, and operas and ballets, and of French actors and Italian singers. But already the German stage was improving. Hitherto German plays had been beneath contempt—mere coarse, stupid farces, with a strong admixture of what we should call clown-and-harlequin business. We have seen how they bored Wilhelmina, and pleased her father. The Margrave had lost all taste for this sort of thing by an incident which occurred one day when he went *incognito* to see a German troupe at the "Golden Lion." On the steps the drunken Hans Wurst, the clown, knocked up against him, and quite gave him a dislike for such performances. But in 1736 the Hans Wurst had been banished from the Leipzig stage, and already in 1740 Schonemann's Company, with the famous Eckhof at its head, was bringing German comedy into repute by his art.

The King was growing worse. The Queen wrote to Wilhelmina that the doctors only gave him another week to live; Frederic wrote in the same strain, and that he sent his blessing to Wilhelmina and talked about her. The Duchess of Brunswick had gone to Berlin to see her father, and Wilhelmina thought it her duty to do the same. She asked Frederic's advice. There is a great discrepancy between the letter as given in the Memoirs and the real one, dated February 2nd, 1740. The former is dry, formal, and official. In the latter, the Margravine says that the King had written to her more than once that it would please him to see her, and, she asked, would it be convenient for her to come this month or next? But Frederic was not to say anything about it, as she wished to surprise her parents. The letter she gives in the Memoirs is different, and not to be found in the autograph letters.

A month later Frederic wrote again, with messages

from the King to her. She was not to worry, and to take care of her health. "If she lost her father who had loved her, a brother who cherished and adored her still remained." At the end of March Wilhelmina wrote again a rather formal letter of sympathy and resignation. Of Frederic's reply she gives a totally different version to the original. It is cold, cynical, unfeeling. He was worn out with the long and weary illness, and impatient, as a young man generally is in a sick-room. She might do as she liked, he leaves her a free hand, but, on his advice, she would stay away; he could not imagine why she wanted to come.

"It is eight years since you have been in this country, which has perhaps effaced the remembrance of a hundred thousand trifles which two days in Berlin would refresh at your expense. I quote (wrongly, Hosea x. 8) "Happy are the absent or those who do not know what is happening, for often we cry out 'Oh! mountains fall on our heads, oh! walls crush us.'"

But it seemed as if the illness would hang on a long time yet.

"I am returning to the galleys to-morrow" (he wrote from Rüppin); "adieu, my dearest sister, love me always."

It must be remembered that the latter part of the Memoirs was written during the coldness between brother and sister. That is the reason why it appears as if the Margravine had exaggerated and falsified Frederic's letter to make it seem as if he did not want her to come. He kept her informed during May of the state of affairs, and on June 1st a courier brought a few very hurried, but affectionate, lines to "my dearest sister."

"*Le bon Dieu* disposed yesterday at 3 o'clock of our dear father. He died with an angelic firmness, and without suffering much. I shall not know how to repair the loss which you have just suffered, except by the entire friendship and sincere affection with which I shall be all my life,

Your very faithful brother,

FREDERIC.

Nothing gives us more an idea of the worship of Kingship during that period than the addressing and the wording of the replies Wilhelmina sent. She calls her "dearest brother" "Sire," "Your Majesty," and signs herself "his very humble, very obedient sister and servant," adding stiff, formal expressions of sympathy suitable to the occasion, but some natural wishes for Frederic's prosperity, prayers for the continuance of his friendship, and inquiries after her mother's health, and suitable messages.

In her Memoirs she complains that, though she wrote as usual to him, six weeks passed without a reply, and then only a cold one came, dictated. It is difficult to reconcile this statement with the seven letters we possess of the month of June only; the King died May 31st. Frederic's letters are just the same, sparkling, affectionate, confidential; they have not altered a hair's-breadth, though he is overwhelmed with business.

He tells Wilhelmina that the title of brother is more glorious to him than that of all the very Christian, very Catholic Kings, Defenders of the Faith, and her friendship more to him than all the servile reports of obsequious subjects. "I beg you to treat me as brother, and not as King, the first character will always be more glorious to me than the second," he writes the very day of the funeral, and a week later sends her a long account of it.

It is Wilhelmina who is stiff and cold, even calling him "Sire," but for the last time, in August. The only solution to the enigma is that she was writing in the bitter time of the coolness of two years later, when out of gear with Frederic, the world, and herself.

The King was planning to come and see her, time and circumstances permitting, and weather, for he knew how Wilhelmina hated the cold, and bad seasons. He was as "impatient to see her as a lover for the return of his mistress." In a week he will be off to Cleves, and from there he can make a little tour. He asks, can the

Margrave raise him a few hundred men? He needs troops badly, and will pay well, and ends by speaking very pretty to his dear and darling sister and "with my compliments, please, to the Margrave."

Already great plans were fermenting in his brain.

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[*Face page* 51, *Vol. II.*

FREDERIC II. KING OF PRUSSIA

"O! toi qui j'ai cheri des ma tendre jeunesse."
Ode by the Margravine to her brother, September 1, 1750.

CHAPTER IV

BROTHER OR KING?

Frederic the King comes to the Ermitage.—Pleasures and pains.—"The course of true love."—A memorial of these red-letter days and nights.—The Margrave and Margravine to Berlin.—The Kaiser's death.—A critical time at Rheinsberg.—The first meeting of the Margravine and Voltaire.—The Demoralising of Dorothea.—Frivolity, philosophy, and tactics.—Something in the air.

On August 15th, Frederic with a small and carefully chosen suite, set out *incognito* on his Rhine-land journey. But he turned aside out of his way, and reached the Ermitage two days later. "I nearly died of joy when I heard the news, and was so upset that I was ill for two days," ecstatically chronicles Wilhelmina.

It was her first summer at the improved Ermitage. In expectation of her brother's visit the new road, known as the King's Way, had been made, the beautiful broad and now shady avenue by which the Baireuth burghers and the Wagner Pilgrims drive up from the town. At the entrance to the Ermitage had been posted twenty-four cannons, which thundered a welcome, making the beech-woods ring. But it was a sad and sore summer that year in South Germany, following upon the terrible winter. The weather was rough and wet, all the low-lying lands were flooded, and on every side yet ungarnered harvest met Frederic's eye.

Robbery and thieving were so much on the increase that a recent edict had been made ordering all thieves of over twenty gulden to be hung; a strange trait of inhumanity and despotism in a ruler as kind-hearted and devoted to art and culture as Margrave Frederic. But in Wilhelmina's heart there was gladness when Frederic, the preliminary formalities of his succession over, and, at last, his own master, threw business and kingship to the winds, and "set out for Baireuth to see the sister I love no less than esteem."

On each side of the front projections of Margrave George William's mansion, the Margravine had added a cube of four rooms, with a fifth behind. She was spending £5,000 a year on the Ermitage improvements, but this was the first year that it was ready for occupation. Probably the interior decorations of the new premises were yet incomplete, for only that year had the Italian artists who were at work on it reached Baireuth. But certainly the beautiful ceiling of the first of the new rooms was ready for Frederic to see. It is dated 1740, and signed by the artist Torelli. The wood-panelled walls are decorated with gilt rococo designs. Over the door are mythological paintings, and the ceiling represents the flight of the Trojans. On the steps of a palace lies a little black-and-white Pomeranian dog, probably Folichon, the successor of the darling lost at Erlangen, and whose speaking eyes follow the beholder round the room.

It was a brilliant group of young men who arrived that August at the lovely retreat among the beech-woods above the Main. The young King, in all his new pride and glory, his eighteen-year old brother and heir, "so changed and grown up that I hardly knew him," says the sister; the old Dessauer's eldest son, Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, soon to win his laurels; Hotham's "honest Borck"; Münchow, lately recruiting officer at Baireuth, but now the King's Equerry and friend. There was Federsdorf, Frederic's private

secretary and factotum; "Algarotti, one of the finest *beaux-esprits* of the age," the Margravine calls him. A fervid, dark-eyed young Italian, Frederic's "Swan of Padua," brought for conversational purposes, being full of speculations on every subject under the sun; he had written books on the opera, taking it seriously, as a moral school, even as is done at Baireuth at the present day, and was therefore much appreciated by his hostess.

To meet the King there hurried over *incognito*, like him, Bishop Schönborn of Bamberg. So interesting, well read, and full of knowledge, his "pedantic conversation" must have been a leaven among the lighter, more sparkling talk of the younger guests. Politically the Kaiser's partisan, he had doubtless come over to spy out secretly how the land lay in the shape of the new young King. Frederic, with Heaven knows what plans fermenting in his head, probably picked the Bishop's brain, but kept his own counsel.

Not a little to the annoyance of Wilhelmina, who would have liked to enjoy her brother by herself, Frederic sent for the Anspbachs. There had never been any love lost between them, yet twenty couriers were dispatched to bring the cat-and-dog couple over. Frederic wished to rivet all the links of the family chain, and also to use his new influence and power to improve his sister Frederica's wretched married life. Not only did he speak his mind to the quarrelling husband and wife themselves, but also to the courtiers who fermented their disagreement. When he gave the Margravine of Baireuth a little diamond star worth £30, and a fan with a watch in it, and the Margrave a gold snuff-box set with diamonds and his miniature, he bestowed upon Frederica of Anspbach the same value in ornaments. But the ill-living, "wild Margrave" only received a snuff-box set with a white stone cracked in the middle, which he at once gave to one of his servants.

It will be remembered that at his former visit Frederic had bestowed upon his sister Wilhelmina good

advice about the management of her financial affairs when her husband became Margrave. He now repeated it, seeing by their budding extravagance in building and beautifying, and by the expensive Court they were gathering round them, how much it was needed ; Frederic had inherited his father's parsimony to a certain extent, though he shared Wilhelmina's artistic ambitions, and had himself just finished his beautiful mansion of Rheinsberg. To him Wilhelmina and the Margrave unburdened their souls of their debts and impecuniosity, and not in vain. Frederic promised to send a financier to audit their accounts.

Only three days the King stayed, but they were great days ; Wilhelmina's heart was yearning towards him, but she writes that she found him stiff and embarrassed with her. In their private talks he seemed *distrait*. The beloved brother, now very much a King, had schemes in his head Wilhelmina wot not of. He had soared beyond her horizon, and was no longer to be guided and ordered about by the elder sister.

But there was another person who seemed to have made quite a conquest of the uncle who had not seen her since she was a baby. This was the eight-year-old little Frederica, whose *belle humeur* charmed him.

Besides acting as hostess to this galaxy of wit and intellect, the Margravine had other questions to solve during the three days of the King's visit. Münchow had fallen in love with Dorothea von Marwitz during his former stay at the Baireuth Court. He now proposed to her. Could he but gain the consent of the King and of her father, the hand of the rich and beautiful heiress might be his. He implored the Margravine to influence her lady-in-waiting and her friend in his favour. Happy for Wilhelmina had she but done so ! A further complication was the elopement of Caroline, the youngest Marwitz. The gentle, *mignonne* little beauty at last took her fate into her own hands. Ever since she first came to Baireuth in

1735 we knew she had been in love with the rich Count von Schönberg, at that time gentleman-usher to the Margravine, and that he had singled her out of all the Baireuth beauties. But their attachment was seemingly a hopeless affair, on account of the strict law forbidding Prussian heiresses to marry out of their own country. Her relations did all they could to stop it. Her sisters had written to her father to come and fetch her away, and to marry her in Prussia, and Schönberg left the Margravine's service and became Master of Horse to Frederic. In this capacity he had now come with the King to Baireuth. But the crafty little Caroline—who could have thought it?—under pretext of a trip to Carlsbad, met her lover on his way, and eloped with him.

The Margravine, in one of the detached leaves of her Memoirs, dated "of the year 174–," gives an account of the intrigues of the Marwitz maidens and of the runaway match of Caroline, the best of the bunch:

"I have already said somewhere in these Memoirs that Mlle. Caroline de Marwitz had betrothed herself on her father's advice to the Master of the Horse, Count von Schönberg. General Marwitz had given his consent to this engagement on condition that it should remain secret. The late King, my father, having made a law that all rich heiresses should not marry out of his dominions, M. de Marwitz had therefore resolved to try and find matches for his two eldest daughters, hoping that subsequently he should obtain the consent of this Prince to be allowed to marry the third out of his dominions. The two eldest sisters found that this scheme did not suit their book. Neither the one nor the other at all fancied being shut up in a garrison, or in the country with their father. A private reason made them further averse to it. They had secret *penchants*, of which I was quite in the dark at that time, and they tried to stir up their father against their sister to break off the latter's marriage and make her contract another in the King's States, hoping that they should then be arbiters of their own fates. The youngest sister had found out their plot. She loved her *fiancé*. They arranged to get married. In order to do this she pretended to be ill, and obtained leave from her aunt to go to Carlsbad. . . . She did indeed go there to hide her little game, but, instead of returning to Baireuth, the Count took her to one of his estates, where he married her, unknown to the two aunts. The King had no sooner been told this news than he wrote a fulminating letter to

General Marwitz, ordering him to recall the two eldest daughters home to him and to make them leave my service. The General therefore wrote to his eldest daughter. His letter was full of abuse of the youngest, on whom he bestowed his decided curse."

Naturally Frederic was annoyed at the proceeding, and there was discussion about it during his stay, but it does not appear that he blamed his sister Wilhelmina. For, three years later, she wrote to him about it as follows, at a time when the elder sister was causing so much coolness between them. "I very much blamed her proceedings ; it is a love affair which has lasted eight years, without the efforts of the relations being able to break it off. "*Liebende zu überwachen sei schlimmer als des Argus Dienst.*" "I can refer you to the conversation which I had the honour to have with you about this here, and which I have often thought of since this incident." *Cette coupable*, having gone against the orders by which her stay at the Baireuth Court was permitted, lost her heritage.

Besides the recently finished new wings there was much for Wilhelmina to show her brother at the Ermitage, about the grounds—the new walks in the woods, the alleys, the fountains and cascades, the new grottoes or hermitages, arbours and fancies of all kinds. There were plans, designs, suggestions to be talked over, as the two sauntered about the wood walks on warm afternoons ; indoors there was music, and the Margravine herself has handed down to us how the musical evenings were spent. In the inventory of Rheinsberg in 1742 is described "a lacquered table with five gilt feet on which is the Margravial Baireuth Orchestra."

It is now to be seen in the Monbijou Museum at Berlin. Painted on it under glass is a most interesting group in the old drawing-room at the Ermitage, before the new music-room was ready. An ugly room, probably furnished in the style in which George William had left it, it shows what Wilhelmina's more artistic

taste had to suffer when she came to Baireuth. "For the chimney mirrors hide the frames of the portraits, and the latter touch the ceiling and hide the heavy tassels which form the frieze. Two of the portraits are covered by a *portière*. The music-rest, the table, and the 'cellist's chair are all inferior furniture."

At the harpsichord sits the Margravine in a low-necked dress, her head, turned to the spectator, dressed with powder. Behind her stands her husband, distinguished by an Order he wears, probably the Danish "Order of the Elephant"; he is playing the flute. The orchestra is composed of six violins, and bass viols, three bassoons, one counter-bass and one 'cello.

Behind the Margravine stand the ladies-in-waiting, Dorothea and Albertine von Marwitz and Freinn von Hütten. On the left stand two more men with Orders, and turning over the leaves for the Margravine is a gentleman, perhaps the Head Director of Chamber Music, William Frederic, Freiherr von Seckendorff. The solo singer, who wears no wig, is probably Margareta Furiosa, an Italian singer who had been engaged at Baireuth for the last two years. In the centre of the front facing the orchestra stands a listener, perhaps Frederic himself, placed there in memory of his visit.

Which was over all too soon. On the fourth day the King whirled away westwards in his mysterious jaunt across the French frontier, and Wilhelmina is left lamenting. "I had so much to say to him. I had got nothing said at all!" Alas! it is ever so! Have we not all felt it thus after a brief glimpse of those we love?

An unaddressed note shows that no one but Wilhelmina knew where he was gone.

"*Un voyage indispensable*," he wrote to her, the day after he left, "*pour affaires, me conduit à Strasburg*, I reveal to you the secret begging you to say nothing. I thank you again a thousand times for all the kindness and affection you showed me at the Ermitage, and I beg of you sometimes in your leisure hours to think of a brother who loves you tenderly, and who will be all his life perfectly faithful and devoted."

"I could not find expression strong enough to show you, my dearest brother, how struck I am with all the favours with which you have loaded me here," replied Wilhelmina immediately on having the note.

"*Tout me manque* since your departure, it seems to me as if I was in a desert, and my only pleasure is in recalling all your kindnesses and the happy moments I have spent with such a dear brother, whose image is so deeply impressed on my heart. No one has been told by what road you have gone, as I pretended to be as puzzled as the others. The Margrave of Anspbach is very pleased with you. There was another little scene the day after you left, but they have now made it up fairly well. The gentlemen of their Court seem very dumbfounded, and quite well understand the meaning of what you said to them. It seems to have made an impression. The Margrave has the honour to reply to you, my dearest brother, with reference to the gracious proposals you made. We each await your orders, and you can imagine the delight I shall have at seeing you again, which will make us forget the sad state of our affairs. The only thing I fear is being a burden to you. The Margrave will arrange his affairs so that the person you send will find no difficulties. We hide all this from everyone. The Margrave is quite resolved to take your good advice. We both consider you like a father, and you indeed deserve that title by the way you act to all the family. I hope with all my heart that you will finish your journey happily, and I hope especially, my dearest brother, that you will take care of your health, which is more precious to me than anything in the world, and remain, with an unequalled affection and profound respect, my dearest brother,

"Your very humble and very obedient sister and servant,

"WILHELMINA."

A return visit to Berlin had been arranged. Directly he reached his own dominions, and dropped his *incognito*, Frederic wrote from Wesel fixing it. He hoped very much to be able to set their affairs to rights. Would they tell him if it would suit them to come to Berlin early in October?

"Be kind enough to write to me quite naturally how much you want for the expenses of the journey, and I will take care to send you the sum in time. You will find a table at Berlin"—reminiscences of the old starvation days surging up—"and the best set of rooms I can arrange there, and all the love and tenderness you can imagine to greet you. . . . . Adieu, my adorable sister, love me always, and be persuaded of the sincere and faithful friendship with which I am always," &c., &c.

Then there followed the attack of fever, in the middle of which Frederic received Voltaire for the first time. Letters were impossible, but directly he reached Charlottenburg, in spite of stress of business, he wrote again, announcing preparations for the Margravine's reception, and thanking for two recruits the Margrave had sent. The Queen would receive her with open arms. Would it suit her to stay the night at Potsdam? Might he beg her to bring her decorator Torelli? Probably he would willingly engage him entirely, and lend him to her as long as she wanted him? He was rejoiced to hear from Beust—Fräulein von Grumbkow's husband—that he had left her well:

"All the moments which draw me nearer to you give me such an intense pleasure, I wait that happy day with extreme eagerness, and I wish only to make your time at Berlin pleasant to you."

About the middle of October they set out. Frederica, who had been ill, but had now recovered, received a special invitation from her fond uncle. Münchow was sent to meet the Margrave and Margravine on the road, to hear how she was, and ask if she would dine at Potsdam, or come straight on to Berlin. Frederic sent his compliments to dear Frederica, and

"Hopes soon to embrace you and assure you with the voice of infinite affection, with which I am," &c., &c.

Thus was Wilhelmina received with all due honours at Berlin. Her younger brothers, and the Princes of the blood, and all the Court, awaited her at the foot of the grand staircase of the Schloss. How different to her former arrival. In her room the young Queen, her sisters, and the Princesses received her. But oh! disappointment, the King had another return of fever, and was invisible! But he sent a message that he hoped to see her to-morrow. With her mother Wilhelmina had a touching meeting, finding her in deep mourning. In fact, the lugubrious aspect of the Court chilled her pleasure-loving heart, and she missed her father:

"Nature has her rights, and I may say with truth that I was never so moved in my life as on this occasion."

There was a private family supper, and she met again all her brothers and sisters, "altered and grown up."

The next day she found the King thin and weak. In her Memoirs she says his reception was not cordial, and she saw he no longer cared for her. But we must make allowances, as usual, for her low spirits when writing; she saw everything in the blackest colours, and the letters belie the Memoirs.

The King and Queen went immediately off to Rheinsberg, where rooms were to be prepared for the Margravine, and the latter stayed on a fortnight with her mother. Sophia Dorothea was in a melancholy state. She had been completely shelved; "his mother's darling," the boy whom she had so completely governed and led, not always wisely, but often too well, in his youth, directly he mounted the throne had shut her out of all part and lot in the government. To the end of his life Frederic always remained uncovered in his mother's presence, but his mental attitude must have been very galling and bitter to her. It was the punishment she dree'd for her inordinate ambition, the duplicity and her intrigues of earlier years.

To her mother's influence may be traced the unpleasing portrait Wilhelmina pens of Frederic, as she found him, and as Berlin spoke of him. All the honours loaded on her could not make up for what she thought was the loss of his love, and for the bad light in which her idol appeared to herself and to everyone. But a few months later, when his subjects viewed their new King very differently, his sister, writing when his glory was in full blaze, begs her readers

"To suspend their judgment till I have developed the character of this great Prince."

But alas! the development was never penned, and it is sad that this is the only portrait by Wilhelmina

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[*Face page 61, Vol. II.*

THE CASTLE OF RHEINSBERG, WHERE THE MARGRAVINE FIRST MET VOLTAIRE

of Frederic as King that should have come down to us.

On the 26th of October, Kaiser Charles VI. died, a most momentous event for Frederic and for Germany. Two days later Wilhelmina joined her brother at Rheinsberg.

Directly after his marriage Frederic William gave his son the estate and manors of Rheinsberg, on the Grünerick Lake, on the borders of Mecklenburg, about 50 miles from Berlin. Frederic had pulled down the old house, and amused himself during the years immediately preceding his accession with building the mansion as we now see it, and with laying out and planting a garden in the beech-woods which run down to the water's edge.

Wilhelmina drove for 150 miles over the sandy wastes of Brandenburg, doubtless reminded of former hated journeys to desolate Wusterhausen. But, though it was now about November, and the northern air had a nip in it for one who hated cold as she did, Wilhelmina's joy kept her heart warm. She knew what a welcome awaited her, her feelings glowed like the golden beech-woods in which Rheinsberg is set, as she drove through the little town, just rebuilt after the fire, into the forecourt of the mansion, and alighted at the stately entrance. At last she saw "Remusberg" (as Frederic called it, from the Remus Island in the lake) from whence he had so often written to her, and the building and laying out of which she had followed with such interest while at work at her Ermitage.

It is not a palace, still less an Ermitage. It is just a country house, built in the shape of an E, without the middle line, and a round tower at each end of the wings, which are connected by a colonnade, with a balustrade on the top which forms, both above and below, a paved walk. The house stands just on the edge of the lake, and the views across it to Remus Island and the gentle wooded heights are very lovely in a quiet

way. The little river Rheine, brown from the peat, flows on one side into the lake, which winds away indefinitely, forming part of the great Mecklenburg chain of waterways. Across the wet moat the Margravine's ladies were lodged with the household in the long stone building, with wings, containing sixty rooms. At the end nearest the lake is the theatre. The left or south wing of the mansion was the King's. Wilhelmina was probably accommodated in the centre block, looking on to the colonnade, and commanding, through the pillars, lovely peeps of the lake.

Wilhelmina had come to Reinsberg to enjoy herself. Frederic had written to her while she was yet in Berlin—"Hoping to heaven that he might be able to give her all the comforts and amusements possible"—and was arranging the rooms a little "to receive his dearest sister in a suitable manner." Further, he had collected a house-party to meet her such as she loved, "*Mon frère Auguste*, the heir, Maupertuis of the Berlin Academy, Jordan, Kaiserling, Finkenstein, a friend of their youth, son of the old tutor, Pöllnitz, Federsdorf, factotum, almost friend, and last, but not least, Voltaire was to come! It was a brilliant prospect. But the realisation!

Wilhelmina had been disappointed in the King at Berlin during their short interview. In her Memoirs she notes how unpopular he was with the country. When she came to Rheinsberg she found him ill again with fever, and dosing himself with quinine, then a new remedy; during the whole of her visit he never went out. She hardly saw him all day. He sat at work in the chair at the writing table with the sloping lid, which we still see in that upper study with the delicious view across the lake to the golden beechwood hills. But his thoughts were far away.

After the bombshell of the Kaiser's death, the Commander-in-chief, Schwerin, and Podevils, the chief minister, had been summoned. For four days they held

secret conference with the King, even dining privately with him. Something important was in the air. The Elector of Bavaria sent an express to protest against the Pragmatic Sanction, and to start his claims for the Kaisership and the Austrian dominions. Europe was simmering in a ferment of no one knew what. King Frederic was hurrying on his Rhine fortifications ; troops were marching towards Cleves :

" officers on furlough are ordered to their post ; on arriving at Berlin you notice a great agitation in all departments of the State. The regiments are ordered to prepare their transport, and to hold themselves in readiness for marching. Magazines are being formed at Frankfürt on the Oder and Crossen. There are large trains of artillery getting ready, the King had frequent conferences with his generals. By the middle of November troops to the extent of 30,000 have received orders to be ready for marching three weeks hence."

Thus Bielfield ; and what does Wilhelmina say of her brother ?

" It is surprising that, full of ills as he is, he could manage all the affairs ; nothing was done which did not pass through his hands, and what filled his head was the conquest of Silesia. His arrangements were made so secretly and diplomatically, that the envoy of Vienna at Berlin was not informed of his designs till they were on the point of being executed."

But was Wilhelmina taken into his confidence, as in the old boyish days of his secret plans for flight, or as in the more recent times of his jaunt over the French frontier ? The crisis of his life had come, the moment when his bold and secret stroke, the unexpected blow from a young and inexperienced ruler, of whom the world knew and expected little, was to begin the breaking down of the stronghold of Austria, of the old, worn-out system of despotism and superstition and bigotry, was to usher in a new era into Europe, and to make Prussia a free country.

At this supreme moment, when by an accident, after so many years, she found herself by his side, was his

alter ego, his other soul, his intellectual *confidante*, the sister admired, revered, looked up to, to be shut out of his confidence?

From the Memoirs we glean nothing; it is hard to say what really happened. But it is impossible to read the few lines in which she discusses the situation without feeling that the Margravine is either concealing something she knew, or glossing over her want of knowledge, by dragging in bits of mere Court gossip, only adding:—

"I rarely saw the King, I had no reason to be pleased with our interviews. For the most part they consisted of embarrassed civilities, or sharp jeers at the bad state of the Margrave's finances; often he made fun of him and of the Princes of the Empire, which hurt me very much indeed. But the stay at Rheinsberg only seemed to me pleasant on account of the good company there was there."

It was the zenith of Rheinsberg's day, the last time it ever held its Sovereign in its walls as host. "From all persons who return from Rheinsberg the unanimous report is that the King works the whole day through, with an assiduity which is unique, and then, in the evening, gives himself up to the pleasures of society with a vivacity of mirth and spritely humour which makes these evening parties charming."

On November 21st Voltaire arrived, ostensibly to confer about the publication of Frederic's *Anti-Machiavell*, and to discuss philosophy. But, in reality, he was sent by Fleury, who was growing anxious at Paris, to worm out what he could of Frederic's plans.

"Voltaire has arrived," wrote Frederic to his "Swan of Padua," momentarily at Berlin, "sparkling with new beauties. Nothing can be more frivolous than our occupations here."

That evening the company were assembled in the large concert room on the first floor which looks out on one side to the Cavelier House, or household quarters, and on the other, west, onto the inner court, and through the columns of the arcade onto the lake.

Between the tall windows, the long, gilt-framed mirrors, surmounted by trophies of arms, reflected the fair women in their powder and brocades, and the equally gaily dressed men, collected beneath Pesné's lovely ceiling, —"The Rising Sun dispersing Night"—so prophetic of the present political situation!

The King himself led his distinguished visitor up to the Margravine:

"Here, I present to you my beloved sister!"

A great moment for Wilhelmina. One can imagine her sparkling enthusiasm as the two minds which had so much in common flashed into talk.

A golden six days followed. The daylight hours were spent in exploring the beautiful gardens which Frederic had been laying out for years—the steps and statues, the temples, the broken columns, the alleys, the points of view—and in longer excursions through the now golden beech-woods and over the little hills which rim the Grünerick See, and in gliding in its smooth waters on the soft, sunny autumn afternoons. Then, when the day drew in, and mists began to rise out of the lake, what gaiety indoors in the beautiful rooms, with their gilt and glitter, their tapestries, their paintings! The King would descend from his eyrie and would play billiards in the vaulted billiard-room opening out on the wide terrace, and looking across the bridge over sleepy Rheine, up the wide grass avenue bordered with close-cut hedges to the column on the distant hill.

There was dancing in the Shell Room, with the painted frieze of shells, or the guests sauntered through the Chinese Room, with the quaint paper, or the SalaTerrena, the Grotto Room below, or sat talking all the 'ologies on the Gobelins-covered couches under the classical marble frieze.

There were French plays in the theatre opposite, at the end of the Cavelier House; Voltaire's *Mort de César* had been rehearsing for weeks past; then there

was always music in the evening. How could it fail when Wilhelmina was with her brother?

"There were concerts," she writes, "when, in spite of his weakness, he played two or three concertos on the flute, and without flattery, one may say that he surpassed all the greatest masters on that instrument. The after suppers were devoted to poetry and science, for which he has a talent and an infinite facility. All these things were only relaxations to him . . . . . not over till four in the morning." This the bright side of that Rheinsberg stay. But for Wilhelmina, there was another, a seamy side.

Not only was she shut out of the confidence of the brother now merged in the King, or if she was admitted to it, was naturally overwhelmed and anxious at his audacious project; but she had her own very private worries.

The social life at Rheinsberg was not entirely devoted to the 'ologies, quite ordinary flirtations, sometimes very pronounced, found place in it. The Prussian Court now missed the sober, restraining influence of Frederic William and his Queen, with their strict moral tone in the relations of the sexes, and their stern, calvinistic background. The young Queen, practically a nonentity, was quite unable to influence in any way those about her. Gossip and scandals were rife.

Only Frau von Sonnsfeld and Dorothea von Marwitz had come to Rheinsberg with their mistress. The niece struck up a friendship with the Queen's ladies, the sisters von Tetow, and Frau von Morian. The former were pleasant enough, but mischief-making and slanderous. The latter, no longer in her first youth, but well-preserved, witty, and vivacious, was of disreputable character, and had not the slightest regard to decency, and "spoke of the Queen at table in such unreserved language that the men blushed," writes the Margravine.

This society completely demoralised Dorothea. She

imitated Morian's *double entendres* and *risqué* ways, and the Tetows' giddiness, and modelled herself upon them. Thus she laid herself open to being talked about, and was openly chaffed about her flirtations with the Margrave.

But the Margravine, in her Memoirs, takes up the cudgels for her friend, and writes that she was grossly libelled. She spoke to Dorothea, and showed her how she had forgotten herself in this her first launch into a great world, and how she had been led away. Dorothea was distressed. She offered to leave the Court, and to return to her father. Wilhelmina, who had no wish to lose her friend, persuaded her to remain, and herself gave the lie to the scandal about her, but Dorothea had had ideas put into her head which later bore fruit.

On the 2nd of December Voltaire took his leave of the King, no wiser as regarded politics than when he came, and the Court returned to Berlin, the King greeted "by such a crowd in the streets as if they had never seen him before." The Margrave went off to see to his own land, but his wife could not tear herself away from her brother at this crisis.

The mourning was now over, and Berlin rushed into carnival amusements, such as always began before Christmas. "The King," writes Wilhelmina, "gave a masqued ball at the Castle every Monday; Thursday a public concert, and Wednesdays and Fridays masqued balls in the town among the most important nobility."

But beneath all the gaiety surged an undercurrent of diplomacy and intrigue, of prying and planning, envoys from Austria anxiously inquisitive. Our old friend Dickens, now Sir Guy, was inquiring on the part of England, with the boldness of an old friend and ally, but only gleaning that the King had no intention of supporting the Pragmatic Sanction, or of submitting to Austrian supremacy, and as to other nations, it was "hands off" in what did not concern them. A few days later and the secret was out. Foreign envoys and

ministers were informed that Frederic was going to hurl himself upon impoverished, defenceless, inexperienced young Maria Theresa, to seize Silesia—lying so open to him, no one to interfere, as on the Rhine side—under plea of ancient claims on its four Duchies. If the Queen of Hungary submitted, he offered help, an army, money. If she did not, the Prussian troops, as Frederic told his generals, "were to face those who, under Prince Eugene, had the highest reputation—the greater will be the honour if we conquer . . . my cause is just, my reasons are what we can do, the issue lies in the Future."

The carnival came to an abrupt end. From a masqued ball at the Schloss on December 12th, the King went off very early in the morning to put himself at the head of his troops.

Well had he prophesied to Voltaire, after hearing of the Kaiser's death: "I believe there will, by June next, be more talk of cannon, soldiers, trenches, than of actresses and dancers for the ballet."

CHAPTER V

FURTHER GLIMPSES

Life at Baireuth during the War of the Austrian Succession.—How Dorothea tried to save herself.—The lulling of the Margravine. A boy lover.—Welcome and unwelcome visitors.—A jaunt to the Kaiser's coronation.—Found out.—The worry with the Marwitzes.—A whirl of gaiety.—A call on the Empress.—The Margravine's estimate of Charles VII.

Though Wilhelmina would have preferred to remain at Berlin till her brother's return from his campaign, important business took her home early in January, 1741. This business, to which she only alluded mysteriously in her Memoirs as having been dragged into at Rheinsberg, and as one in which so many people's honour was concerned that she cannot yet write openly about it, is supposed, from an erased paragraph of the original manuscript to have been an "Association of Circles," suggested by Maria Theresa to support the Empire. Indeed, almost immediately upon the Margravine's return, the Dowager Empress, aware of Wilhelmina's influence with her brother, sent an envoy to Baireuth to try and clench the proposals which had been made covertly to the Margrave and Margravine in Berlin. Maria Theresa, determined not to give up her four Duchies, sent seductive offers to Baireuth. But the attempt led to nothing, for the Margravine declined to mix herself up in the affair. So Wilhelmina did not think it necessary to tell Frederic anything about it.

But the latter must have got wind of Maria Theresa's machinations, for we find him sending a letter on February 4th from Stichlen by Major Gleichen, of the Margravine's household, begging her not to be alarmed lest the tide of war should roll her way. Should there be any danger she would be warned in time, "but, for the love of God, don't let the Margrave take any further steps, or he might have trouble later on. Be calm, I implore you once more, and do not fear anything. A thousand *amitiés* to the Margrave. A thousand compliments to dear Frederica."

During the War of the Austrian Succession Baireuth and the Franconian Circle remained neutral. "Happy little Margravate," Frederic called it, "remaining quiet while all Europe was agitated, a halcyon's nest undisturbed by tempests."

The Margavine had, as usual in winter, a long and tiresome journey home, the roads horribly bad. It was not rendered more agreeable by the Marwitz girls not "ceasing all the way to din into my ears jeremiads on their departure from Berlin." "Must we then," said Dorothea, "go back to that *diable de nid*, where one is bored as a dog, after having tasted the pleasures of Berlin?"

The Margravine, though somewhat annoyed, made allowance for one so young and giddy. Dorothea eventually recovered herself and quieted down, and, unaffected by the war, life at Baireuth went on as usual, except that many visitors made the carnival time very gay.

With intense interest Wilhelmina watched her brother's victorious career in Silesia. He kept her informed of his progress. She hated mountains, as we know, and the following amusing letter congratulates her brother on his exploits. Maupertuis, nicknamed "*Le Lapon*," had been to Lapland to find out the shape of the earth by measurement of an arc of the meridian. He was so vain and conceited that Voltaire, joking,

used to date his letters from that expedition "*An—depuis que la terre fut aplatie.*"

"BAIREUTH, 17*th February*, 1741.

"MY DEAREST BROTHER,

"I have cause to thank you doubly for the favour of giving me your dear news in a time when you are occupied with so many important affairs. It gives me all possible joy, my dearest brother, and especially to learn that all is going as you wish. One must confess that you have profited marvellously by Maupertuis' lessons. The latter rounded the earth, and you have rounded your country. They say you calculate more correctly and more easily than he does. Might I beg you to tell me your method, which might effect an unequalled benefit in our country, and in flattening it would give me the happiness of oftener paying my respects to you. But it is not mountains which would hinder me, no obstacle, however rough, would stop me, directly it is a case of seeing what I love best in the world, for nothing equals the unparalleled affection and the profound respect with which I shall be soon *à mon très cher frère*," &c.

Frederic found time, a few days before the capture of Glogau, the "key of Silesia," to remember their conversations at Berlin, and to put his minister Boden in charge of the Margrave's finances.

The victory of Mölwitz in April delighted the devoted sister, who gave *fêtes* in honour of it. "In every way it contributed to his glory," writes Wilhelmina, slurring over the fact that he fled from the battle! "The victory which he gained exemplifies his military genius, for *son coup d'essai fut un coup de maître.*"

In the battle General Marwitz, now Governor of Breslau, and Commander-in-Chief of all the troops in Silesia, was wounded. He wrote begging for his eldest daughter to come and nurse him. Two days before she left she came in to her mistress, in tears and almost speechless with sobs:

"I see," she said, at last, "that I must leave you, Madame. The reports which have got abroad in Berlin to the damage of my reputation have been only too much believed. Nothing in the world is dearer to me than my honour, and the attack upon it I have felt more than death. I can only undeceive people by with-

drawing from Court. I am going to be the most unhappy person in the world. I feel I shall not be able to live away from you, and, to crown all my misery, my father wishes to get me married. I shall be therefore a double victim, both of the grief of not seeing you, and of the misery of marrying probably some man I hate."

The Margravine writes she was much distressed by Dorothea's tears, and tried to combat her fears and feelings. After two hours she succeeded in calming her and making her promise to remain in her service.

It is difficult to understand or explain the Margravine's conduct. For the last three years past hints and rumours had reached her about her husband's infidelity. Pöllnitz at Ems, Fräulein von Boddenbrück on her way through from Berlin, had both given hints. During the illness of the Margrave at Erlangen, which had interrupted a journey opposed by Sonnsfeld in a manner only to be explained by what she feared about her niece, Wilhelmina had suffered an acute attack of jealousy. At Berlin she had found herself obliged to speak to Dorothea frankly, and now the girl came to her herself, confidentially, begging to be allowed to leave.

The Margravine wrote as above at least three years later, probably more, and added: "After that, could I think she was betraying me cruelly in taking from me what I had most dear, and stealing my husband's heart?"

Wilhelmina was loyal, pure-minded, and cleanly brought up; though a woman of the world, used to the dissipation and scandals of Courts and idle courtiers, her own tone was always high. She hated coarseness in a coarse age, she loved amusement, but she "loathed dissipation." From the first moment that she got to know him well, she had always been devoted to her good-natured, cheery, attractive husband, though he was her very opposite, and so much her inferior. From the first moment too, she, as also Frederic, had noted in him a tendency to flirtation. But she was too wide-

minded, and too loyal and trusting, to be suspicious. She was also very fond of Dorothea, in an elder-sisterly, half-motherly way. She had trained and educated her. The idea that the girl could stoop to anything base and dishonourable was repugnant and incredible. At this moment she was quite happy and unsuspicious. The Margrave, she says, behaved so well to her, and was so affectionate, that she trusted him entirely. Dorothea also behaved well with the Margrave, and was always with her. No one could have had any suspicions, she writes. That the Margrave joked with Dorothea a great deal did not annoy his wife, who "hated restraint and did not want to put any on him."

The summer passed peacefully in Baireuth while the war raged on her frontiers. The King had written, both through the French Ambassador and personally, to Belleisle, the Marshal in command of the advancing French force, begging him "to spare the little States of Anspbach and Baireuth with his armies and he will answer for them"; and his French allies did "spare in every possible way the lands and subjects" of his two sisters.

During the summer three boy-visitors came to Baireuth, the three Princes of Würtemberg, on their way to Frederic, their guardian, at Berlin, who found them "nice children, well brought up, and with a conversation in advance of their years." They made great friends with the little Princess Frederica, doubtless playing with her in the gardens of the Ermitage and at Sanspareil, in the thatched summer-house which was her favourite play-place. The eldest, Charles Eugene, the reigning Duke, though only fourteen, fell in love with the little beauty, and "amused all the Court very much with his attentions," writes her fond mother.

After the departure of Dorothea von Marwitz her second sister became devoted to the Margravine, who was amused by her vivacity and wit. On one of the pillars of the open-air Theatre at the Ermitage can still

be seen engraved in the stone a heart with an arrow through it. Below is this inscription :

"*Albertine de Marwitz mieux gravée dans mon cœur que sur la pierre.*"

Certainly Wilhelmina had the faculty of attaching people to her !

Probably owing to the desire for news caused by the war, and the growth of public opinion, this year, 1741, was noticeable for the first publication in Baireuth of a political paper. It was published at Erlangen and called the *Erlangen Gazette*. We shall hear more about its articles later on.

Early in January, 1742, Charles VII. of Bavaria, the newly-elected Kaiser, passed *incognito* through Baireuth on his way to his coronation at Frankfürt. He travelled in such a shabby carriage that no one would have guessed who he was had he not sent one of his gentlemen with apologies for not being able to stop and call. The Margrave jumped on his horse, rode after him at his usual breakneck speed, and caught up the Kaiser three miles off. The Kaiser, now an ally of Frederic, got out of his carriage, and they had a cordial interview of half-an-hour.

The Margrave and Margravine were then seized with a wish to go and see the coronation—merely staying a day *incognito* at Frankfürt. All was arranged by their minister there, one von Berghofen, when suddenly the flighty Duchess of Würtemberg proposed herself on a visit *en route* to see her boy, for whom she was regent, and who was being educated at Berlin. Her hostess thus describes her :

"Her features are fine, but her complexion is *passé* and very yellow ; she has a flow of words which obliges everyone to whom she speaks to keep silence ; her voice is squeaking, and so loud that it flays one's ears ; she has wit and speaks well ; her manners are very engaging towards those she wishes to attract, and very free with men. Her manner of thinking and of acting show a great contrast of dignity and commonness. Her flirtations had made her so talked about that her visit gave me no pleasure."

On the top of this uncongenial guest came Dorothea von Marwitz, back again. Though she had asked for an extension of leave, no sooner did she hear from Wilhelmina of the proposed Frankfürt jaunt than she hurried back quite unexpectedly, and just when her mistress did not want her presence. She seemed much changed, so conceited and full of the fuss which she said had been made about her in Berlin, and of her father's large estates, of which she was now joint-heiress since her sister's runaway match. She even went so far as to imply that she was making a great sacrifice in returning to what we know, however, she had called the "*diable de nid.*" Wilhelmina was very hurt with her friend. Not only the vanity and swagger, but the ingratitude, struck her. Herself so loyal to her friends, she could not understand this line at all, and showed it by the coldness of her replies. Dorothea was annoyed, and complained to the Margrave. The latter, after a few days' cold-shouldering of his wife, at last told her, when she asked him what was the matter, that she was treating Dorothea badly, and that the latter was very hurt that her mistress no longer cared for her.

Wilhelmina was both surprised and angry that the girl complained to the Margrave about their little differences. But, seeing that she could not bring him round to her view, the Margravine pretended that Dorothea had no cause for complaint. Upon which the latter, with many protestations, and much show of feeling, again led her mistress to believe that she was only acting irresponsibly and frivolously, and "our peace was then once more concluded."

The departure for Frankfürt had been fixed for January 27th, when Pöllnitz, the gay and giddy, who had a trick of turning up when there was any fun afoot, suddenly appeared from Berlin, bringing news of the marriage of Prince William with a Brunswick Princess, a very important step, as he was his brother's heir. A hurried note from Frederic to the Margravine

followed him; she "would be surprised to find him writing from Olmütz when she thought him at 'Remusberg.'" But he had concluded a secret treaty with Maria Theresa, as he wanted rest and winter quarters for his troops after eleven months' campaigning. He promised verbally not to take the offensive again, and Austria, at the instance of the English envoy, agreed to cede Lower, and part of Upper Silesia, and to withdraw her troops.

The temptation was too good to be resisted, as Frederic wrote himself. He added force to fraud, and in December, when the snow lay deep on the mountains, Schwerin, by his orders, rushed suddenly into Moravia, where the Austrians expected no attack, and took the fortress of Olmütz. But the Austrians drove back the French when within sight of Vienna, and pushed into Bavaria. The Bavarians were forced to retreat out of Bohemia, and Frederic was obliged to move to the succour of his allies by creating a diversion in Bohemia.

The King's departure from Berlin upset the Duchess's plans. She now proposed to stay at Baireuth till his return, which did not suit her hostess at all. "It was necessary to use a great deal of intrigue to get rid of her." Which they ultimately did on the 28th, and started off themselves the next day, a merry party, the two Marwitzes (Sonnsfeld was no longer able to go such jaunts), Pöllnitz, Duchâtelet, and Count Schönberg, who had evidently been forgiven.

Pöllnitz could resist neither the temptation of following in his adorable Margravine's train, nor the prospect of a little gaiety. But Frederic was annoyed, and wrote scathingly of his chamberlain:

"I do not know what whim seized Pöllnitz to go to Frankfurt without asking my leave; that fellow has nothing but wit, not a shred of decent behaviour."

"*Comment à cinquante ans être encore hanneton?*
L'omplate vouteux, hypocondre et cynique,
Du ponant jusqu'au sud étendre sa critique?
Dieu! dans quel âge enfin lui viendra la raison?"

The roads were terrible, and the Main was in flood. However, by dint of travelling day and night, the party reached the gates at Frankfürt in two days. The Margravine caught a bad cold. Von Berghofen came to tell them that the coronation had been put off for a fortnight, and that everyone knew they were coming, and that it would be impossible to keep up their *incognito* if they came into the town that night. So they put up at a little village outside, and next day, when Berghofen had put everyone off the scent, went secretly to his house to see the Emperor's grand entry. Let the Margravine tell her own story of this merry company's adventures:

"My wardrobe was not well furnished. My ladies and myself had only one 'black Andrienne' apiece, which I had invented in order to lessen the baggage. The Margrave and the gentlemen had taken only their uniforms, and so to disguise themselves, they had to blacken their eyebrows, which did very well with the big black wigs in which they were got up. I thought I should have died of laughing when I saw them thus beautified.

"In this fine get-up we got down at Berghofen's, who hardly knew us. I had stuffed out my dress, which gave me quite a respectable presence, and we all had on hoods which covered our faces. He thought us so unrecognisable that he suggested we should go to the French play. We jumped at it, as may well be imagined, and went and perched ourselves up in the second tier of boxes.

"The next day we saw the entry of the Emperor. *Des plus superbes* . . . The same evening I had the fun of going to a masked ball, where, not being known by anyone, I amused myself very much teasing the masks."

For fear of being recognised during the long interval of waiting, the party took up their abode at a little summer cottage on the outskirts. Here Wilhelmina paid dearly for what amusement she had had at Frankfürt by her sufferings from the excessive cold, and from the annoyances the Marwitzes caused her when they were all boxed up together in the little house. The girls, not improved by the flighty Duchess's visit, had quite lost their heads over this trip, and gave them-

selves airs, and wanted to be treated and served like the Margravine. If Dorothea was conceited, Albertine, whom she had demoralised, was spiteful and satirical. They laughed and jeered at everyone, and "tore them to pieces, not excluding present company. As they were really very funny, the Margrave was much amused. He sat in their room all day, and did not perceive that he was often their butt. When I was there they did not say a word, but sat and giggled in corners like sillies."

At last Wilhelmina could put up with this behaviour no longer, and reprimanded them. Albertine said nothing, but Dorothea "got on the high horse, and began to abuse me. I wish to God," adds the Margravine, writing sadly in after years, "that I had split with her then and there for good; I should have spared myself many sorrows."

But she did not wish to make a scene; and, also, she hoped to correct her, so did nothing.

They returned to Frankfürt; and amid all the gaiety that ensued there Wilhelmina forgot her worries.

"I did not miss a play or a ball. One evening at the theatre my hood got disarranged. Prince George of Cassel, happening to raise his eyes in my direction, recognised me. He told the Prince of Orange, who was near him. Instantly they came running into my box, when I least expected it. There was no longer any disguise possible. The two Princes would not leave us. They led me to my coach, and begged the Margrave to let them come to supper with us, which he could not refuse. From that day they stuck to us."

With the conversation and wit of the hunch-backed Prince William of Orange she was delighted. She made an attempt to see his wife, her first cousin, Anne of England, who was at Cassel. He promised to bring her to make the Margravine's acquaintance. But his short stay at Frankfürt made it impossible. It is a pity that Wilhelmina thus missed the only chance she ever had of seeing any of her near English relatives. Except her grandfather, they were always entire strangers

to her and to Frederic. It would have been interesting to have known her comments on, and opinions of them.

When once she had been recognised, the presence at Frankfürt of the charming and vivacious Margravine, who was thought so much to resemble her brother, could not be hid. Any further *incognito* was impossible.

"Next day we went to the ball. The Elector (Prince-Bishop of Köln), who knew what had occurred the evening before, lay in wait for us. Directly we appeared he came to ask me to dance, saying he knew me."

Happy Wilhelmina, not only dancing again, but with one of her favourite ecclesiastics! After a long talk, he introduced the Princess Clementine of Bavaria, his niece, the two Sulzbach Princesses, and his brother, Prince Theodore. They fetched the Margrave, to whom they were very civil.

It was now a question of clothes. Manifestly it was impossible to go about in uniforms and black *andriennes*, whatever these last may have been. So the party withdrew once more to their retreat, and a courier was dispatched post haste to Baireuth to bring what was wanted.

One day, just as she was waiting for the Margrave to put her into her coach, a lady suddenly called. She looked like a waiting-maid; but though her ways were common, she had evidently been used to good society. She turned out to be the wife of Marshal Belleisle, the French Ambassador, the soul of all the gaieties, the maker of Kaisers. The Margravine had hitherto carefully avoided her, for fear of precedence troubles. However, now she received her like any other of the ladies who called, and she did not stay long, and talked chiefly about the King, singing his praises. Clever Madame de Belleisle! What did she want of Baireuth?

After a couple of days in the garden house, with Orange much in attendance, they returned to Frankfürt for the coronation of the poor sick Emperor, even then miserably ill, and in a bad way in every sense. For national enthusiasm had reached boiling point in Austro-

Hungary. The tide had turned in favour of the Queen, and the very day that Wilhelmina saw Charles VII. receive the Imperial crown with oriental splendour in the Römerhall at Frankfürt, a wild herd of Hussars, Pandours, Croats, and the like, swept into Bavaria, and seized Münich, his capital.

Frederic's inroad into Bohemia and taking of Olmütz had helped matters somewhat, but the poor Kaiser, without troops or means, was obliged to have recourse to the Princes of the Empire. Berghofen and Montmartin, the Margrave's ministers, having been won over by Belleisle and his gold, had drawn up a treaty, which they presented to the Margrave the very day he came back into Frankfürt. He discussed it with his wife. It was her first step in diplomacy. On the one hand, she remembered Frederic's express hint to keep quiet, that is to say, neutral. On the other, the Margrave assured her how advantageous this treaty would be to him, and Berghofen, who, presumably, feared the Margravine's opposition to it, carefully prevented her from reading it. It was settled before they left Frankfürt, but only to be ratified when the Margrave had complied with certain conditions.

This business kept the Baireuth Court several days longer at the Free City. The dresses had come, and the Margravine received everybody under the name of the Countess of Reuss, and her house was always full. Belleisle himself paid her several visits.

Then Berghofen, who had acquired a great influence over the Margrave by bringing about this treaty, now declared the Margravine could not leave without calling on the Empress. Wilhelmina's pride of birth was up in arms. She declined point-blank, as a King's daughter. Etiquette would never allow such a thing. There was no precedent for the meeting of an Empress and a King's daughter, and she would not know what position to take.

Berghofen was very angry and almost forgot himself. He said that Wilhelmina would damage the Margrave

if she refused, and had better have stayed at Baireuth than have come to Frankfürt to make trouble. But Wilhelmina stood her ground. We know of old how firm she could be about her dignity. She demanded to be received at the foot of the stairs by the Court, that the Empress should come to meet her at her bedroom door, and thirdly, most important of all, that she should be given that right of royalty—the *fauteuil*.

Frederic's ministers were dragged in to decide the knotty point. In their opinion the *fauteuil* was out of the question. But it was essential to be on good terms with Frederic's firm ally, the House of Bavaria, and the Margrave could not afford to quarrel with it. A compromise was suggested. The Margravine should go *incognito*, as a countess, and so could not claim Royal, or Margravial rights. There was no time to write to Frederic, who, we imagine, was much too busy to be troubled with such questions, and for a whole day the matter was discussed between the officials of the two Courts. In the end the Margravine was to get the reception for which she stipulated, but was only to be given a chair with a back, but the Empress was to take a very *small* armchair!

The next day the Margravine went to the Saalhof, the palace on the Main, built not long before on the site of the old Imperial Palace, and paid this tremendous visit. She thus describes her hostess:

"I must say that, in her place, I should invent every etiquette and ceremony in the world to prevent me from showing myself. The Empress has a figure less than small, and so stout that she looks like a ball; she is as ugly as possible, without any presence, without any gracefulness. Her mind is in keeping with her face, she is excessively bigoted, passes nights and days in her oratory; the old and the ugly generally fall to the share of the *bon Dieu*! She received me trembling, and so put out of countenance that she could not say a word. We sat down. After a long silence I began the conversation in French. She replied in her Austrian jargon that she did not understand that language well, and begged me to speak German. This conversation was not long. The Austrian dialect and the Lower Saxon are so different that, unless you are used to

them, you don't understand each other. That is what happened to us. We should have made any listener laugh by the cross-purposes stories we told, only understanding now and then a word, and guessing the rest. This Princess was so much the slave of her etiquette that she would have thought she was committing a crime of *lèse majesté* in conversing with me in a foreign tongue, for she knew French. The Emperor should have been present at this visit, but he had fallen so ill that they feared for his life. This Prince deserved a better fate. He was gentle, humane, affable, and had the gift of captivating hearts. It may be said of him that such an one shines in the second rank, and is eclipsed in the first. His ambition was greater than his ability. He had some intellect, but intellect alone is not enough to make a great man. The position in which he found himself was above his sphere, and, as ill-luck would have it, there was no one round him to supplement the talents which he lacked."

CHAPTER VI

WILHELMINA THE PHILOSOPHER

The marriage of Frederica arranged.—A dabble in diplomacy.—The flighty Duchess again.—Deterioration of Court tone.—Visits.—The Memoirs end and Voltaire's letters begin.—Frederic grants a boon which had been better left unasked.—Founding a University.—Frederic and Voltaire to Baireuth.—Business combined with pleasure.—Frederic and Voltaire as diplomats.—The opening of the University.—The china factory.—Frederica's education.—Her betrothal.—Pöllnitz and pilferings.

Almost immediately upon the return of the Margrave and Margravine from Frankfürt, a deputation arrived from Würtemberg to ask for the hand of the young Princess Frederica for the young Duke. Though Frederic writes to his sister in a very different strain, the match had been practically planned by him at Berlin, and he was acting in as high-handed a manner as Frederic William when disposing of his daughters. His *chère Frédérique* was to be sacrificed for political purposes, as the event showed. In order that the Prussian Kingdom might have a family buttress in South Germany, her life was to be blasted. The Margravine, as we know, disliked the Duchess. But the marriage was a brilliant and tempting one to an ambitious mother, and the Duke a nice boy, well-mannered, and with a mind above his years. His portraits show him to have been a tall, slim, well-made young fellow, with his mother's long nose and fine eyes. The pity of

it that what seemed a highly suitable love-match should have so soon turned out so disastrously!

Frederic wrote from Bohemia, where he was resting his army, taking charge of the marriage contract, and offering to give his god-daughter her dowry, and to pay the expenses of the wedding, which, judging from its splendours, must have been considerable. But he wrote to his sister that he looked "upon your children as my own."

Frederic was anxious about the treaty which the Margrave had concluded with the Kaiser at Frankfürt.

"You are not *au fait*, my dearest sister, with the springs of politics in Europe just now, and could easily make mistakes in your conjectures. But I beg you to have confidence in me, and to look upon me as if I was your uncle in an Indian Company, and who, having access to reliable information, could warn you if you should sell or hold your shares. But the Margrave must do as he thinks fit, I can only warn him of the risks he runs."

It was a kind and temperate letter, though the Margravine, in her Memoirs, writes of the King's letters on the subject as *très dures*. The Margrave, who had been so upset by the whirl of dissipation at Frankfürt that he had really not read the treaty over, had been led away by Berghofen, and, on second thoughts, gave it up entirely. The advantages it offered—the acquisition of a little town and some territory, the ceding of an Imperial legal right, and the appointment of the Margrave as commander-in-chief of the army of the Franconian Circle, with the rank of Marshal—did not serve to counterbalance the expense of the raising the new regiment stipulated for, and for which no adequate pay was promised. So the treaty vanished into limbo. But what remained was not the violent friction, not the hard letters, not the interposition of the head of the family, as the Margravine suggests, but what was almost worse and more far-reaching. The least little rift had split in the lute. That, hitherto, Frederic had looked up to Wilhelmina as his equal in brain power, if not his superior, is expressed in these lines addressed to her:

"Oui, je suis protégé par ce puissant génie,
Mes yeux sont éclairés du feu de son esprit.
Plus que par Apollon, Minerve et Uranie,
Dans le sentier du vrai, par vous je suis conduit."

But now that he was immersed in practical politics he found her wanting, and could no longer rely upon her entirely. Had he but known how worried she was with her domestic troubles, he would doubtless have made allowance for her. But Frederic was to be kept in the dark. Wilhelmina's pride would not allow her to wear her heart upon her sleeve for even him to peck at.

In the early summer the Duchess of Würtemberg came again on a visit. The marriage had been arranged. It is hard to reconcile Wilhelmina's writing to Frederic —"that she left yesterday to our great regret, being pleasant company"—with what she says about her in the Memoirs :

"This alliance obliged me to be intimate with this Princess, in spite of myself, I say, because this woman was so notorious that she was spoken of as a 'Lais.' The Duchess has a flow of conversation, and a mind given up to frivolity, which amuses for a bit, but wearies in the end. She gives herself up to an immoderate gaiety, her principal study being to fascinate; all her efforts are to that end—teasing, silly prattle, winks; in fact, everything that is called coquetry is brought into play with that object."

Unfortunately, the two Marwitzes imbibed the notion that these were fine French manners, and modelled themselves on the flighty guest.

"The eldest, who had begun at this time to gain great influence over the Margrave, induced him to put the Court manners on another footing. They stuck to the Duchess, and followed her lead blindfold. In a fortnight everything was changed. They took to romping, to throwing napkins at each other's heads, to running like wild hares, and at last to kissing, and all to the accompaniment of very ambiguous songs."

"In fact, so far from being French," says the Margravine, "they behaved more like ballet girls or actresses." Of course, Wilhelmina, with her refined

tastes, her feeling of dignity, and her lofty tone, did her best to put a stop to these proceedings, but in vain. Their aunt Sonnsfeld "thundered, nagged, swore at her nieces, who only turned their backs on her. How happy I was in those days! I was still the dupe of the Marwitz, and did not suspect their intrigues. The Margrave was always the same to me, very attentive, and I slept peacefully while they plotted my ruin. . . . She and the Margrave behaved so cautiously that I did not notice anything of their secret understanding."

Thus, in peace and happiness, Wilhelmina celebrated her brother's victory of Czaslaw in May with a *fête* at the Brandenburger Palace. Cannon were fired from the mimic fleet on the lake; there was a banquet at which the health of the *aimable vainqueur* was drunk; and dancing followed. After this the Duchess departed, and the Court moved to Erlangen.

This was a busy year for the Margravine. She made, she writes, "half a campaign, running about on visits and travels, never more than a fortnight in one place." In July, after staying at Anspach, they went on a return visit to Stuttgart, and on to Wildbad with the Duchess, to take the waters. In attendance on that giddy dame was the Marquis d'Argens, for the moment her first favourite. He was an affected Frenchman who talked about "Posedam," writes Frederic, was "gluttonous and slovenly," but "very literary, and fond of arguing," which doubtless rendered his society agreeable to the Margravine, and proved an antidote at once to that of the tomboy Duchess, and of her stiff, sulky Court.

With the mention of the visit to Stuttgart the Margravine's Memoirs suddenly cease, most abruptly. That she intended to continue them a few disjointed and loose pages clearly show. Her reasons for not doing so can only be guessed at by the events which ensued after she thus ended writing in 1744. The

"shrill glib" voice is hushed, the facile pen drops. Yet we would so fain have had her chronicle the apotheosis of the glories of the Court of Baireuth, the culminating successes of her beloved brother.

On July 2nd, Frederic, who had been much gratified by a batch of recruits, wrote that he had made peace, forced to it by "the ill-will of the French, the bad faith of the Saxons . . . that is why I wished the Margrave had not been so quick with the Kaiser, as some trouble may come of it to him." He asked leave to send his aide-de-camp Grumbkow to stay at Baireuth, and keep him informed of the military operations going on in those parts. Ever mindful of his sister's peace and comfort, he gave that officer a letter to the French commander, Prince Charles of Lorraine, asking him to be careful of Baireuth if he was beaten.

The Margravine was determined not to let Voltaire drop after their short acquaintance at Rheinsberg. A year later she sent him a present, accompanied by a letter from Supperville, who had now become her adviser and manager in all matters literary and intellectual. There came no reply till the October of the following year. Then began a long correspondence, which only ceased with Wilhelmina's death. The letters are some of the most interesting we have of Voltaire's, and of the most unique. For the sage, though his caustic, satirical tongue and pen never spared either friend or foe, always treated the Margravine with a respect and admiration such as he offered at no other shrine, and not a joke nor a jeer, an insinuation, nor a misunderstanding, marred their epistolary friendship. He now wrote acknowledging the proof of her gracious favour, and apologising that she has never received the packet, both of verses and of prose, which he himself posted to her on receipt of her charming present, with the letter of the Philosopher Supperville. He had been to Aix to pay his respects to her "very august and very amusing brother, whom he found well,

and looking like a hero, making fun of his doctors, and taking the baths for amusement."

"His face has now grown quite round, as befits a crown of laurels. . . . I shall never cease to regret those days when I had the honour of paying my respects to Your Royal Highness and to His Majesty, at your retreat at Rheinsberg. The kindness shown to me by the Margrave will ever be present to me, and all that I most desire is that I may once more be permitted during my life to enjoy the same honour. I am, with profoundest respect, &c.

"VOLTAIRE."

About the middle of July, 1743, Wilhelmina wrote to Frederic that she was losing her friend Dorothea again. General Marwitz, doubtless hearing reports of which the Margravine knew nothing, was recalling his eldest daughter. She begged her brother to use his influence to allow her to remain, adding that she had disapproved of the marriage of Caroline, but, as she was not actually her lady-in-waiting, she had not informed the King of it officially, though they had, as we know, talked it over during his visit to the Ermitage.

"But it is not for that guilty one that I implore you," she writes, "but for her two sisters, who have been so long in my service, and are entirely innocent of the escapade of the youngest, and I cannot be sufficiently grateful for the attachment they have shown to me since they have been with me. I have, so to speak, brought up the eldest, whom I look upon as a daughter, and from whom it would grieve me mortally to be separated. They get the most brutal letters from their father, who wishes to force them to marriage, in order that they may obey him. The eldest is so devoted to me that she has resolved to give up any idea of marriage in order to remain in my service, but I do not doubt that the younger one will give in to her father's wishes, provided she is allowed the time to choose a suitor. I can answer for it that neither one nor the other have any fancy here, and you would not run any risk, because, if they did wish to marry against your wishes, which will not occur, you are still always the master of their fortunes."

Frederic did what Wilhelmina asked him. Dorothea von Marwitz remained on at Baireuth, with what result to her mistress will be seen.

Books, as we know, had been Wilhelmina's most beloved companions all her life. Thrown back upon herself by the dull society of her little capital, a society which thought of nothing but hunting and fishing, she read increasingly. Ample opportunity was afforded her by long weeks of ill-health, and as her range of thought widened, so her desire grew to do something to break through the crust of ignorance, of vacuity, of emotional, Pietistic cant, and of dead-alive Lutheran dogmatism which environed her. The ambition of the German princelets of the day was to have a university. A taste that way ran in Wilhelmina's family. Her grandmother had founded Halle, her cousin Caroline of Anspach, Göttingen. Even the lunatic Duke of Weimar was, as Frederic said, "mad for universities." Wilhelmina's wishes now took a similar turn. It was Supperville who became her instrument. For nine years he had now been at her elbow, a kindred spirit, guiding her into the realms of knowledge. The idea of a university appealed to the Margravine's pride as a ruler, as well as to her personal tastes, and Supperville, whose weakness seems to have been conceit, was just the man to carry out her wishes.

The thing began in a small way with the moving of the *Ritter* Academy, at Erlangen, to Baireuth, and uniting it with the Gymnasium there into an Academy of Higher Science, which was endowed with the stipend of the recently dissolved convent school at Heilbronn. It was opened in a small and rather feeble way in March, 1742, with under thirty students, and was inaugurated by a speech of Supperville on the Margravine, and an allegorical Italian cantata. At first the scheme did not work well. The Court, the officers, the artisans, and the clergy hindered it. Supperville told the students they might carry swords; the officers and the apprentices, who also carried them, objected, and the students did not like it. The clergy resented the entire absence of any theological teaching. Then there

were money difficulties. The four faculties were set up with eight professors, mostly from the Gymnasium, which suffered in consequence.

It was impossible that the peace which Frederic had concluded with Maria Theresa could last. The Queen was burning to recover her lost provinces. She turned on the French; Charles VII. crumbled beneath her onslaught, and Bavaria was hers. The Imperial Princes were inclined to Austria, and if the latter could but subdue the French, it was possible that she would attack Prussia, could she also secure the help of the Saxon-Poles and Hanoverian-English. Frederic had to bethink himself how to prepare for the blow which must come, and how to support the sinking Kaiser? It was of great importance to him how his two brothers-in-law acted in South Germany.

At the beginning of 1743, the Margrave of Baireuth had attached himself to the Kaiser, and the approaching matrimonial alliance with Würtemberg would throw the latter on the same side. The Austrian party in Baireuth, headed by Count Schönberg and Count Bürghaus, the Margrave's friend, made mischief by spreading underhand reports that Frederic wished to break off the Würtemberg match.

But in the summer the Austrian luck had turned. England had interposed on behalf of the unfortunate Queen, and had won the victory of Dettingen. So Voltaire paid his fourth visit to Berlin, again in the guise of a diplomat, sent by Louis the XVth to tempt Frederic into an alliance, or, at least, neutrality. In September, 1744, Frederic came to see Wilhelmina, who had declined an invitation to spend the winter at Berlin. Yielding to the great little man's entreaties, he brought with him Voltaire. Imagine the joy of the Margravine, for already Voltaire had written:

"Oh! Baireuth! Baireuth! Quand serais assez heureux pour voir vos fêtes!"

He was pining to renew his acquaintance with his

charming hostess, and devoured by diplomatic curiosity to find out what was the King's business in Franconia.

A recently discovered poem of Voltaire's in the Royal Archives at Berlin thus describes his pilgrimage to Baireuth.

"*Les pélerins s'en vont dans leurs voyages*
Courir les saints et gagner les pardons ;
Plus dévot qu'eux, je fais mes stations
Chez des héros, des belles et des sages.
Voilà des saints en qui j'ai de la foi
Et l'Évangile où tout esprit doit croire.
Bayreuth, Berlin, sont des temples pour moi,
Et c'est toujours le temple de la gloire."

The getting thither was as disagreeable as ever.

"*. . . des chemins maudits*
Que le diable a forgés sans doute,
Pour m'ôter votre paradis
Et me damner sur votre route."

Frederic brought a large following, which included his brothers, the Princes Augustus William and Ferdinand, and, of course, Pöllnitz. The Duchess of Würtemberg came to meet him. But Supperville, under pretext of arranging about the moving of the University to Erlangen, went thither to avoid Frederic's visit, for Frederic made fun of him, and he had maligned Frederic to his sister.

A delightful fortnight ensued. "Baireuth," wrote Voltaire, "is a delicious retreat, where one enjoys all that is pleasant in a Court without the inconvenience of grandeur."

He was not too busy in his new character of go-between to throw side-lights on that delightful fortnight. "I have seen a Court where all the pleasure of society and the tastes of the mind are collected together. We have had operas, comedies, hunts, and delicious suppers." Wilhelmina was in better health ; Frederic had been sending her another present of Hungarian wine that winter, and, as it suited her, promised to do so annually.

She must have enjoyed herself enormously. Voltaire was "in the best humour," flattered and petted by charming women. Porporino, the wonderful soprano, whom Frederic had been training all that winter in Berlin, came with him, and delighted Wilhelmina. She herself acted with Voltaire at the Schloss theatre in Racine's *Bajazet*, playing "Roxane," and Voltaire "Acomat." But that versatile genius did not neglect his diplomatic business, as his letters show.

"He (Frederic) told me he was going to Anspach to see what could be done for the common cause, that he expected there the Bishop of Würzburg, and that he would try to unite the Circles of Suabia and Franconia. He promised, as he started, to the Margrave of Baireuth, his brother-in-law, that he would return to him with great plans and even great success.

"These successes consisted only in vague promises from the Margrave of Anspach of uniting with the other princes in favour of the Empress, if his Prussian Majesty would set the example. The Bishop of Würzburg was not at Anspach, and did not even send an excuse. The King of Prussia went to see the Imperial army, but did not begin anything serious with General Seckendorff.

"While he made this tour, the Margrave spoke to me a great deal of present affairs. He is a young Prince full of kindness and courage, who loves the French and hates the Austrians. He saw well enough that the King of Prussia had no intention of risking anything, or of sending a neutrality army to Bavaria. I took the liberty of telling the Margrave in substance that, if he could put more troops in Franconia to join the remains of the Imperial army, obtain from the King, his brother-in-law, only 10,000 men, I foresaw that, in that case, France could give him a subsidy to raise another 10,000 this winter, and that all this army under the name of the army of the Circles could unfurl the standard of Germanic liberty, to which the other princes would have courage to rally, and that the King of Prussia, secured, would go even further.

"The Margrave and his ministry approved this plan, and embraced it with ardour, all the more as it would put this Prince in a position to make more than one claim on the Empire, but it was necessary to gain the Bishop of Würzburg and Bamberg, whose head has grown very weak, they say, and the Minister of the Margrave told me that at the rate of 30 to 40,000 crowns he could secure the ministers of this Bishop.

"The King of Prussia, on his return to Baireuth, did not speak of any business to his brother-in-law, which surprised him much.

He surprised him still more by seeming wishful to retain forcibly in Berlin the Duke of Würtemberg under pretext that Madame the Duchess of Würtemberg, his mother, wished to have him brought up in Vienna.

"Thus to irritate the Duke of Würtemberg, and to drive his mother to despair, was not the means of securing the confidence of the Suabian Circle, and of uniting so many Princes. The Duchess of Würtemberg, who was at Baireuth, to talk over the King of Prussia, sent for me.

". . . . More time, more cleverness, and much more vigour than the Margrave of Baireuth has is necessary for the success this winter of the plan of collecting a neutrality army."

In his anxiety to knit Würtemberg to himself against Austria, Frederic had detained the young Duke at Berlin, under pretence of educating him. His mother came and made a scene. Voltaire found her in floods of tears.

"'Ah!' she said to me, 'the King of Prussia wishes to be a tyrant! He wishes in return for my having given over to him my children, and given him two regiments, to force me to appeal for justice against him. I will have my son. I will not have him go to Vienna, I wish him brought up near me in his States. The King of Prussia libels me when he says I wish to put him into Austrian hands. You know how I love France, and that my plan is to go there and spend the rest of my days, when my son has come of age.'"

Frederic had torn himself away from the delights of Baireuth to go to Anspach.

"Ce ne sont point, ma sœur, tous vos brillants plaisirs
C'est vous seule que je regrette,
Je m'arrache de vous, et je reste à moitié.
Accomplissez mes vœux, charmant objet que j'aime,
Que le lien pour nous deux soit à jamais le même,
Le vrai temple de l'Amitié."

His object was to work up his other brothers-in-law, and other Imperial Princes into an association. The Margrave of Baireuth, who had just been made Field-Marshal of Franconia, listened to Voltaire's seductions. Both he and his ministers were more inclined to send a contingent to the Imperial army, than to join in Frederic's neutrality scheme.

Frederic did no good by his visit to Anspach. He returned silent from the sense of failure. The Princes of the Empire were alarmed at his plan. Time was not yet ripe for a League of Princes under Prussia. But the Neutral Association in support of the Kaiser gave offence to Frederic. He had not then the confidence of the Empire. Prussia could, as yet, only make its strength felt by force of arms.

He met with no success anywhere. The Baireuthers stood their ground. Margrave Frederic, following the example of his predecessor, would have liked to play a part in the Empire, for which, however, he had not sufficient capacity. Frederic's sneers at his *petite société, petite cour*, rankled in his memory. He had dressed himself to receive his distinguished relative in the uniform of his Prussian regiment, whereupon the King remarked, satirically, that when he was in that uniform he was under his command, as his general. The Margrave retired promptly, and took it off. So, taking everything together at this moment, for the first time in her life Wilhelmina felt more Baireuther than Prussian.

She succeeded, with Voltaire's help, in calming the Duchess. "It is very sad for you," she wrote to Frederic, "always having to fight women. I fear that in the end you will come to hate them."

He returned to Charlottenburg, and wrote to his sister acknowledging failure, that he had stayed with her a century too little for his own pleasure, and for his business, a century too much. The *Médée*, as he called the Duchess, departed to her own land, having spent the nights at Baireuth in making a surreptitious copy of the *Pucelle*, which Voltaire had brought with him for the Margravine to read. There is also a theory that one of the copies of the Margravine's Memoirs is due to the Duchess's nefarious propensities on this occasion.

Peace reigned, and politics and theatricals gave place to learning. The incipient university had been moved

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[*Face page 95, Vol. II*

THE MARGRAVIAL PROCESSION AT THE OPENING OF THE UNIVERSITY AT ERLANGEN

From an engraving in the "Historia Academiæ Fredericianæ Erlangensis qua dedicationis sacra reficiuntur."

Published at Erlangen 1744, and now in the library of the University.

to Erlangen. As there were no Imperial privileges, no foundation endowments, or buildings for the professors and students at Baireuth, the Margrave decided to remove it to Culmbach or Erlangen. At Supperville's wish it was settled at the latter town, of which he, a descendant of French Refugees, was especially fond. It was housed in the buildings of the *Ritter* Academy.

The new university was opened with great pomp and ceremony, which lasted three days. Triumphal arches were erected in the streets, which were lined with pikemen, and the *bürger* militia. The windows were crowded with people as the long procession drove down the straight streets of the little town to the inaugural ceremony in the German Reformed Church. First came the professors on foot, then the bodyguard of Baireuth Hussars, in their cocked hats, then many coaches containing important people and the household, some afoot. Supperville's coach, as he was Privy Councillor and Chancellor, immediately preceded the Margravial half-open coach, drawn by six horses, the prancing leaders ridden by postillions.

The "Baireuth Pallas," as the Margravine was addressed in the opening speech, writes to Frederic on November 1st :—

"I have been to see the inauguration of the university. I have found it much increased in professors and students. We have some very clever people, which makes me hope the university will succeed. I went by curiosity to a German debate. It was on the divisibility of matter."

She adds that the speakers were, one, a follower of Newton, and one, of Wolff, and that all did well, and without the usual pedantry of their species.

Wilhelmina is not quite correct or frank in this matter. She herself gave the theses to be debated on, and showed herself to be, not only a thinker, but *au fait* with Wolff's philosophy. The first was : "*It is not to be denied that matter can think.*" The second : "*It is*

by no means essential that compound things must consist of units."

Perhaps she was afraid of Frederic's jibes at her new toy, and with reason, for he wrote congratulating her from Potsdam :

" I am very pleased that your University has amused you. I tremble to think how many *savants* it will produce, and if they begin to dispute about the divisibility of matter, what may they not attain to ! But you will have accomplished nothing, my dear sister, if the Duchess of Würtemberg has not argued with your chancellor and your professors."

If the initiative of the University was not quite Wilhelmina's, yet it allowed her for the first time to put her views into practice. She felt that if the French she loved was the language of art and culture, German was that of thinkers, and her aim was to encourage native intelligence. While, on one hand, she arranged for the crowning of the author of a prize poem on the third day, on the other, she ordered the debates on her theses to be conducted in German. That there might be no preparation, only at nine in the morning were the subjects given out. She herself chose the defendants and opponents, who were lawyers, and Huth, the theologian. Any reference to Scripture she strictly forbade. Beginning at ten in the morning, the debate lasted two hours and a half, much to the boredom of the Margrave, and of Dorothea von Marwitz, who sat with the Margravine.

Wilhelmina and Supperville sowed the seed in Franconia. But in their day, and for many years later, the Erlangen University, though its aim and its guidance were good, lacked men and means. It was really only in the nineteenth century that it became strong and important as a centre of Protestant theology. But this was hardly the intention of its founders, of Wilhelmina, led by Voltaire that autumn into the world of thought of Newton and Locke, or of its first Chancellor, Supperville, the medical " philo-

sopher," who was at the same time a pupil of the Jesuits and a Calvinist, the historian of the Berlin Reformed Church and the opponent of the Baireuth Pietists.

But Wilhelmina never became a thorough-going Voltairian. "Like Supperville, she did not understand by enlightenment the watchword of the narrow school of the Encyclopædists *écrasez l'infâme*, but, rather, tolerance and, as its first premise in a university, the secularisation of science."

They had to encounter opposition. At the inaugural sermon, preached before the Margrave and Margravine by the ecclesiastical head of Baireuth, Ellrodt, taking as his text, Isaiah xxxiii., 20, said that the foundation of the University must be built, not upon the discretion of human beings, but upon principles of Divine revelation. And it was not only the free-thinkers who were thus admonished. The Reformed Church was included in the "goats." An attempt to start a Chair of Reformed Theology at an institution founded by a Reformed Princess was vetoed a year later, and again in 1756. The opinions which had made Erlangen what it was after the Edict of Nantes, were only to be barely tolerated in the Margravate. But the tolerance of the new University denied any supremacy to Lutheranism. Ellrodt was elected to the Chair of Poetry and Oratory.

It can, therefore, well be imagined that there was not much in common between the Margravine and her professors, often as she stayed at Erlangen. Her chief interest was the increasing of her "admirable library," on which Frederick so congratulated her, with the view of bequeathing it to Erlangen, leaving time and books to gradually bring about the effect she wished.

The Margravine had found at Baireuth a porcelain factory which had been started under Margrave George William. The clay had been discovered near the Brandenburger Palace, and pottery had been made there for over 200 years. Wilhelmina was very fond

of china, a hereditary taste, as witness her grandmother's collection at Charlottenburg, and her mother's at Monbijou, some of which Frederic sent to her on her mother's death. She mentions in her Memoirs how she lights up her dreary, shabby apartments in the old Schloss by her china cabinets. But her collection was almost entirely ruined by the fire. Of the history of the Baireuth porcelain factory very little is known. It was in existence in 1720, and was fostered by the Margravine in 1737. She recalled the painter, Christian Danhofen, from Vienna. In 1744, it had reached such repute that the Duke of Brunswick, wishing to start a factory, sent for one Glaser, from Baireuth, who was assistant to the painter Metzsch there. Specimens of the ware are very rare. It may be of interest to English readers to know that the three are to be found at the South Kensington Museum in the Franks collection. They are fine ware, and painted in good taste. One cup, with the view of a château and a group of courtly figures, signed "*Metzsch* 1748 *Bäyr*"; a second, having a fluted, gilt base, with a shipwreck, signed "*Bäyreuth, Fec. Jücht,*" and a third with rococo festoons, marked C.B. and H.B. Jücht was a Court painter at Baireuth.

During the brief lull between his Silesian Wars, Frederic occupied himself with working up his opera, building his opera-house, founding his Academy of Sciences, and marrying and giving in marriage his relations—to his own advantage. The little sister Ulrica was engaged to the heir to the Swedish throne. The young Duke of Würtemberg had now been declared of age, his mother having fallen out with her Council. The Princess Frederica was growing up a singularly pretty girl, inheriting her father's charm and her mother's beauty, if not the latter's intellect. *Autre temps autre mœurs.* Wilhelmina had been taught by a *ci-devant* monk. She entrusted her daughter's education to Uriot, one of the French actors

in such high favour at the Baireuth Court, but who was also Professor of History to the pages. Frederica's religious training, however, was in the safe hands of Ellrodt. Thanks to him she was not only able to withstand the wiles of her proselytising mother-in-law, but also became imbued with a deep spirituality which was her sheet anchor during her unhappy life.

On the 22nd of February, 1744, Wilhelmina thus wrote to Frederic of his god-daughter :

"The Duke has just betrothed himself to Frédérique. I wish you to be the first informed of this news, all the more that it is you, my dear brother, that I must thank for having arranged her marriage, and that your care and kindness have brought things to this point. The Duke seems very much in love, and very pleased with his fate. The Duchess can't contain herself for joy, she has behaved like a sensible woman all this time, and has quite won the heart of her son. All this was done hugger-mugger, for the young lover is very shy and did not want any formalities, so the whole thing has been arranged without ceremony. Pöllnitz is still very ill. . . . I have only time to give you again a thousand thanks for your kindnesses, which I hope you will always bestow upon me, as also on my progeny."

Frederic replied immediately: "If possible, get me Pöllnitz's will; one could make a good scene in a play out of it."

The roving old Baron had been sent to Baireuth in January bearing a picture of the new opera house the Margravine had begged for, but really, as a *persona grata* and a great gossip and tale-bearer, to keep an eye on the Margrave's politics, which Frederic thought were becoming too Austrian. The Margravine, who had, as we know, a turn for match-making, encouraged the giddy Marwitzes in trying to arrange for the elderly and impecunious Chamberlain a match with a rich Nuremberg heiress. When refused, the poor old fellow was so hurt that he retired to Bamberg, to a monastery, writing to Frederic that he wished to die in peace. Frederic dismissed him scornfully. But the monastic monotony at Bamberg so palled on Pöllnitz

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that he returned to Baireuth, and the Margravine wrote to Frederic, March 27th :

"Pöllnitz came back here a few days ago. He surprised me very much by telling me that he had asked for his dismissal. I scolded him like a dog, but he replied that he was not good for anything any more at Court, that he should not live very long, that his wit and his temper were no longer fit to amuse you ; he is scarcely recognisable, hardly speaks, and is always complaining. He seemed to feel very much the rumour at Berlin that he had retired into a monastery, and says he came back here expressly to take the communion publicly, in order to show how false the story was. I do not know whither he will wander."

Frederic made hard stipulations, and Pöllnitz tried to blackmail the King over the latter's Memoirs. Frederic had him arrested, confiscated his papers, and tried him by court-martial. He declared, says Podevils, that these papers were solely what Frederic had already seen, and those with which the Margravine had helped him. From Podevils it appears as if one of the Packets of MSS. was a copy of Wilhelmina's Memoirs. Pöllnitz, in his Memoirs, plagiarises terribly from them, and must have had either a copy or the first edition in his hands.

CHAPTER VII

AN OSTRICH-LIKE POLICY

The marrying of Dorothea.—Frederic and Wilhelmina at loggerheads.—Wilhelmina's weak point.—Her relations with her husband.—She trusts her friend.—The Margrave's policy.—The coolness with Frederic.—Baireuth social, intellectual, during the First Silesian War.—Wilhelmina deceives herself and the world.—Pinpricks with Frederic.

On the evening of April 8th, 1744, a courier arrived at the Ermitage in hot haste from Potsdam. He brought a letter from Frederic to his sister such as she had never received before. As she herself would have put it, Medusa's head could not have caused her greater consternation. It began with the quite unwonted address: "*Madame, ma très chère sœur*," and went on:

"It is with extreme surprise that I learn, from a letter of General von Marwitz, you are working to bring about a marriage between his eldest daughter and Count Bürghaus, without even going as far as to ask the General's consent. It is a plan which strikes me with more astonishment in that you will remember, doubtless, the wishes expressed by the late King, our dearest father, who, in letting you have the Marwitz, expressly desired that they should not marry out of their own country, and that they should return here in time. Therefore I hope your good sense and your friendship for me will prevent you going any further in this business, and that you will openly oppose the conclusion of this marriage, which displeases me infinitely, and which will never be agreed to by General von Marwitz, who, instead of consenting to it, will suffer beyond power of words; his life will be in danger from

such a mortal grief, which will be enough to deprive me of a general so brave and worthy. These are the reasons which lead me to believe that you have too much kindness of heart, and too much love for me not to give up this fatal plan, which I shall ever repudiate. On the contrary, if the infatuation of the Marwitz can blind her to such a pitch that she wishes to marry the Count Bürghaus against my wishes, she may rely upon it that I shall declare her incapable and unworthy of sharing in her father's considerable wealth, as has been already decreed in the case of this General's youngest daughter, and for the same reason. It is true that I shall be inconsolable if this unhappy affair occasions a friction and quarrel between us, already as united by blood as by affection. But you will be pleased to take into consideration that it will be impossible for me to give my consent to these foreign marriages of Marwitz daughters. That is why I urge you to announce in my name to that person that she must absolutely not think any more of this marriage, which will expose her to my displeasure, and to the curses of her worthy father. In any case, you will be kind enough to send back the lady here, where I myself will take charge of settling her in marriage. I am, with a very affectionate friendship, Madame, my dearest sister, &c., &c."

This from Frederic! Hard, firm, implacable, but not unkindly. It was the King writing, but the brother peeped through at intervals. Despotism, tempered with affection, was disposing, after the manner of the time, of rich heiress's hands, for the good of their country, and not suffering even Wilhelmina to interfere.

Another letter followed on the heels of the first.

"After having despatched to you my last letter on the subject of my invincible repugnance to the proposed marriage of the eldest Marwitz, I have just received a second letter from the General, their worthy father, which I feel I must send you in the original. You will find there a faithful picture of his sad and deplorable situation, and a reiterated declaration of his paternal wishes. So I flatter myself your kind heart will be touched to the quick, and that you will work successfully to end his troubles in remedying the sorrows you have caused him. You know that the first and principal duty of children consists in obedience to the orders and advice of those to whom they owe their existence, and that these have the right of disposing of their fate. You see how eagerly the good father wishes, and asks, to have his daughters back, and I beg that you will not refuse them to him, but that you will take the generous resolve to snatch him from the brink of the grave by the

prompt return of his children. It is this, then, that I beg of you very urgently, in conjuring you by the affection you have sworn to me, and in assuring you that that which I have for you will only end with my life, and that I am with heart and soul . . ."

A warm, affectionate letter, the brother speaking now, and hiding the King, though it sounds in our ears a little strange, when we look back fourteen years, and remember how tardily, and only on much compulsion, did the writer and the recipient yield obedience to the orders and advice of their parent. Also it is hard for us to understand eighteenth-century notions of the rights of kings, and of parental authority.

And how did Wilhelmina act and write on receipt of these letters? As to her action, a letter of Count Bürghaus forty years later tells us plainly enough. It is a business letter with reference to his late wife's fortune. He says that she had very little inclination for the marriage, but that the Margravine forced her into it, promising to obtain the consent both of the King and of General Marwitz; "to which conditions Her Royal Highness solemnly subscribed at a specially convened meeting of the Baireuth Ministerial and Court Council."

Now as to her writing. To the first letter she replies the morning after its receipt.

"My dearest Brother,

"The courier you dispatched to me came here yesterday evening. I see by your letter that General Marwitz informed you of the marriage I proposed for his daughter. I am surprised, my dearest brother, that you wish to remind me of the wishes of the late King. I kept my word to him about the Marwitzes; they did not marry during his lifetime, but the death of the King freed me from all the promises which I had made during his life, so you have nothing to blame me about on that score. You have never written or spoken to me on that subject, so I am not guilty towards you, all the more that, after the strong entreaties I had made to you to let the eldest stay with me, you did not even do me the honour of a reply, though it was the only favour I had asked you since your accession. I did not imagine, my dearest brother, that you interested yourself so much in the fate of this girl, and as I

knew that my ideas are very like yours, and that I have got rid of a good deal of conventional prejudice, and especially of the notion that a girl of 27, who is of age, should make herself miserable by marrying people she does not know, in order to please her father's whims, and as, besides, the courier I had sent was delayed in returning, I persuaded her to be married yesterday morning, in the presence of a few witnesses, and unknown to her aunt, who, besides having been ill for a week, knows nothing of all this. Your courier came too late. The thing was done. It now only remains for me to implore your mercy for this poor woman, whose devotion to me is the only cause of what she has done. I cannot believe that you will be so hard-hearted as to deprive her of all her fortune, nor to be annoyed with a sister who has given you so many marks of devotion and friendship. I beg you do not drive me to despair by depriving me of your friendship. I cannot imagine that it can be effaced from your heart for such a trifle, which would most certainly have deprived me of one of the great pleasures of my life. I await a favourable answer from you, all the more as, if I had known your wishes beforehand, all this would not have happened, and that you will not refuse me the only favour I have ever asked you. Rest assured that I am not unworthy to receive it, for nothing in the world will ever efface from my heart the respect and affection with which I shall be for ever, my dearest brother . . ."

It is a quibbling letter—"Methinks the lady doth protest too much."

It quibbles over the restrictions on the marriage of the Marwitzes and her promises; it quibbles in that Caroline's marriage *had* been discussed when Frederic stayed at the Ermitage in 1740, just after it. It quibbles by opposing their more modern views on parental authority to Frederic's trotting out of the old-fashioned ones. It quibbles in that the courier came too late. Anxious, and self-accusing it is, too, in the stress it lays on her love and friendship for Dorothea and her pleasure in the companionship. *Qui s'excuse s'accuse.*

To the second, more gentle letter, which appealed to her affection, Wilhelmina replied defiantly, showing a bold front:

"General Marwitz ought to be satisfied that I send him back the second of his daughters (Albertine), and if the eldest married against his wishes, he should only blame himself, for if he had not

wished to force her to marry it would never have happened . . . I rely upon your kindness and your natural justice, and especially on your kind heart, which cannot quarrel with a sister that loves you so dearly."

Why this hasty proceeding, this concealment from Sonnsfeld, Dorothea's nearest relation at hand? Why this defiance of Frederic's reproof, this boldly risking of his displeasure? Was there anything in the world which could tempt Wilhelmina to this? If so, was the game worth the candle, and, if it was, what was the game?

The solution to this apparent puzzle lies in Wilhelmina's wounded womanly vanity.

For vanity was her one weak point, her one piece of womanishness in a character and mind in many points equal to, and in some points superior to that of the distinguished geniuses who delighted in her society and were proud of her friendship. This common failing in humanity is one that should always be reckoned with, particularly with womankind, whose intellectual gifts are superior even to their remarkable physical attractions. Artistic as she was, it was impossible that Wilhelmina should not be keenly influenced by, and appreciative of, physical beauty. She herself has told us laughingly how that at ten years old she was more proud of herself in her much-desired Court train than of being her mother's *confidante*. On important occasions in her life she chronicles her appearance. Her misery over her forced marriage could not make her oblivious of the fact that at her wedding her hair had come out of curl. In times of grief she is careful to hide the disfigurement of tears, and in illness she is troubled by the physical ravages, though her strong will forces her to rise superior to pain. Her thinness distresses her; her mother's gibes at her long neck, on her first visit to her old home, make her miserable; and the English libels upon her figure cause her much annoyance. She notes with pride and pleasure the disadvantage in looks and

appearance that other princesses labour under when thrown into contact with herself. To enhance her brilliant skin she was fond of dressing in black, which was unusual in that age of gay attire. Her daughter had a very small foot; the mother, though already middle-aged, wore tight shoes, in order not to be outdone. As ill-health and years increased, she shrank from sitting for her portrait, a not uncommon foible in women who have been beautiful. Only two or three pictures of her in more mature years are extant, and only one, a miniature, was painted in middle-life.

It is easy, therefore, to understand how bitter must have been the discovery, when her first youth lay behind her, and when ill-health, suffering, and privation had left their traces on her delicate form and features, that she had a rival in the affections of a husband two years her junior, a rival who was young and beautiful.

In the *Henri Quatre* of Baireuth, his *fiancée* had noted as his only fault "*un peu trop de légèreté*," and his brother-in-law a tendency to "*distractions*." But for eight years they had lived happily, on Wilhelmina's own showing. "I love the Prince passionately; our union was of the happiest; a long separation filled me with dread."

Her husband's illness in 1739 terrified her, and on the top of it came the harrowing discovery that he had changed towards her, and the humiliating jealousy—for jealousy is always humiliating to the self-esteem of the one who is jealous—of Dorothea von Marwitz. It was a terrible shock to her. She "had been blind, not seeing a hundred little signs." But, in the end, she allowed herself to be persuaded, and forgave Dorothea, though she could not bring herself to forgive her husband. Yet she was not an exigeant wife, being too clever and tactful not to allow a man of the Margrave's temperament plenty of amusement. Wilhelmina was too much a woman of her world—a coarse world indeed—not to be lenient with his little flirtations.

"I wished him to amuse himself, not liking restraint." But she was of a cold temperament, capable of intense affection and friendship rather than of passionate love. Against any suspicion of scandal, however, the whole fastidious soul of the daughter of that model pair, Frederic William and Sophia Dorothea, revolted. "I love amusement, but I hate dissipation." Indignantly she begs Pöllnitz, when he brings her at Ems rumours that the Margrave has mistresses, to deny them. When Mermann, on his visit to Berlin, spreads malicious reports, she declines to believe them, and to dismiss the fellow, as her brother suggested, thus, for the first time, running counter to Frederic's advice.

At Rheinsberg Dorothea was demoralised by "Finette" von Tetow and von Morian. Her flirtation with the Margrave was taken seriously, and she was openly chaffed about it. The Margravine made excuses, and acted to her in a most wise and motherly way, and, apparently, undoing the harm done. But, unfortunately, the seed had been sown too deeply.

Then came the scene after Möllwitz, when Dorothea's better self fought once more on behalf of her devoted friend and benefactress, and she determined to flee from the temptation she felt she could no longer resist. Wilhelmina judged others by her own pure cold nature. It was impossible for her to suspect the worst; she implored her friend to remain with her, and it was only too easy for the guilty pair to lull her into a false security.

After this came the unpleasant Frankfürt episode. It shows the altered relations between husband and wife, that Wilhelmina, in her Memoirs, writes calmly that there "the Margrave had been very dissipated"; "it was a fault to which he was only too inclined." Evidently she is becoming inured to his infidelities. When they were all boxed up together in a little country cottage in mid-winter weather, she had a revelation with regard to Dorothea's manner of talking and behaving with him. But it was the vulgarity

and hoydenishness of her friend which revolted her. Wilhelmina had so many interests and pursuits, was so immersed in her books, her music, her building, her garden, her correspondence, and her philosophical and literary studies that probably she noticed little of the hum of the Court life around her when at home. A certain high-bred aloofness was natural to her. At Frankfürt the veil was rudely rent, and she was disgusted with the lowered tone which the visit of the Duchess of Würtemberg, the association with the Queen's notorious Finette and von Morian had produced in her friend. She tried her best to correct Dorothea's manners; it still did not strike her that her morals needed improving. "How happy I was in those days! I was still the dupe of the Marwitzes, and did not even suspect their intrigues."

The last consecutive page of the Memoirs is devoted to Dorothea. It was written in, or certainly not earlier than, 1744, the date of Dorothea's marriage. After the Duchess of Würtemberg's departure it runs:

"as I have made out since, the Marwitz then made out her plan. This girl had an unbounded ambition. To satisfy it, it was necessary to throw the Margrave into dissipation (a fault to which he was only too much inclined) and to detach him from the attention which he gave to affairs. It was necessary, not only to deceive me in telling me about the principal affairs, but to lull me by the confidence which the Margrave was to show me. But she kept for herself the distribution of pensions and favours, and especially the revenues. The rumours which had been current at Berlin about her had made her consider her position seriously, and the ascendency which she had acquired over the Margrave. The desire to show off her great mind conquered all other considerations. She saw his weakness for her. She made the most of it, to govern as she pleased. She judged that, in keeping my confidence, and in avoiding all occasion which could give rise to my suspicions, she would succeed in blinding me, and make herself so powerful, that if I did notice her intrigues, I should no longer be in a position to stop them. In truth, her behaviour and that of the Margrave was so cautious that I did not notice in the least this secret understanding."

This is under date of 1742, but written, as internal evidence of the Memoirs shows, not earlier than 1744;

and here the Memoirs end abruptly. They were only resumed spasmodically, and were never completed. Evidently Wilhelmina shrank from telling the tale of the years that followed.

Up to the present she had condoned her husband's lapses, after the fashion of an age which was used to the domestic depravity of monarchs. But she still believed in her friend. It is a curious trait, but not to be wondered at in a high-minded woman to whom friendship was the salt of life.

A year after the opening of the Erlangen University a large folio volume was published, containing the Latin orations delivered on the occasion and an account of the proceedings. On the title page is an illustrated dedication with escutcheon, at the top of which sits the Margrave enthroned; by his side stands a female figure with helmet and shield, evidently intended to represent the *Baireuth Pallas*, Wilhelmina, while behind is a small female figure in powder and hoop, quite out of keeping with the rest of the picture, perhaps intended to represent Dorothea von Marwitz, who sat beside the Margrave and Margravine during the debates. Is it possible that such an illustration, published as it was in 1744, opened the Margravine's eyes to the ambiguous position of Dorothea at her Court? At that time there must have been revelations which were sufficiently glaring to induce her to brave Frederic's displeasure and to hurry Dorothea, against her will, into a secret match with the unsteady cousin who had been wildly in love with her for years, and whom she had always treated with disdain.

Wilhelmina, in the kindness and innocence of her heart, with her strict views about the marriage bond, doubtless thought that she was doing the best for the girl in protecting her from the Margrave's passion by a marriage with the man who loved her; and at the same time Wilhelmina did not lose her friend.

But, as we glance from the final page of the

Memoirs, it was too late. The pair already had an understanding, and had laid their plans well. Part of this scheme was to lull Wilhelmina into security. In her bitter shame and wounded self-pride Wilhelmina was only too willing to lull the world into security, beginning with Frederic, even at the risk of the latter's wrath. The iron had entered into her soul. Yet she was too proud to let the world, and especially her brother, whose admiration and esteem she so highly valued, see how she suffered. How would she appear to him, neglected, spurned, shelved, made ridiculous, by the husband who owed her so much, and who was so much in every way her inferior? She recalled the sniffs and sneers of the Berlin Court over her marriage, and that it should have turned out thus! She could not bear a repetition of those slights, and so she determined on an ostrich-like policy.

Kept thus completely in the dark as regards the ulterior motives of a sister whose heart had hitherto been always open to him, Frederic sought for her motives in quite another direction. The storm-clouds of war were again hanging over him. Austria, once more in the ascendant, was determined to wrest his conquests from him. In the storm and stress of the struggles in which he was involved, the stony-hearted, practical soldier was not likely to seek for emotional causes for Wilhelmina's conduct, when she suddenly, secretly, and in defiance of his wishes, married the Prussian heiress to a Colonel in the Austrian service, a landed proprietor in the country he had conquered. Frederic saw only the political side, and the politics of Baireuth at this moment he did not like or trust.

For the last ten years the Margrave had been going his own way. He had dallied more with the overtures of Count Cobenzel on the part of Austria than his reply to the King gave the latter to understand. When Frederic came to Baireuth he was surprised and

annoyed to find Austrian influence growing in the Franconian Circle, to discover that there was an Austrian party in Baireuth itself, Dorothea von Marwitz its head, and the Duchess of Würtemberg still intriguing there. "I shan't get hold of the Baireuthers," he wrote to Podevils.

From a report of Count Cobenzel to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, husband of Maria Theresa, dated February 2nd, 1743, we find that the Margrave had charged him to recommend Count Bürghaus "specially" to the Grand Duke, when the Count went to Vienna. From Frederic's point of view, he could but come to the conclusion that Wilhelmina, dabbling in politics, had failed him when he most relied on her support in Franconia. He grumbled that he could not induce them to come and stay with him in Berlin as long as they had any money. Even Maria Theresa was aware of some "misunderstanding between the King and his *Frau Schwester*."

The result was a coolness of some years, and for the next three months an almost entire cessation of letters. Not till a month after Wilhelmina's letter did Frederic reply, curtly, coldly, that he judged people by deeds, not words, that he was off to drink the waters at Pyrmont, "from whence he was forbidden to write." Then followed satirical scraps, of a few lines, no birthday letter—"his health was not worth her interesting herself about"—"obliged to her for interrupting her amusements to think of him."

The amusements referred to were a *fête* at the Ermitage in honour of their sister Ulrica's marriage to the heir of the King of Sweden. The water-works were illuminated, and also Apollo and the Nine Muses on Mount Parnassus. The open-air theatre was inaugurated by an Italian opera with a ballet and followed by a French play. This theatre stands near the old Ermitage, yew hedges form the background. It was intended by Wilhelmina to carry out the idea of a Roman theatre.

Five stone columns on either side support slightly vaulted stone arches, which do not entirely roof it in. The proscenium is formed by two massive columns; on the easternmost of them is engraved that sad memorial of Wilhelmina's broken heart, the inscription to Albertine von Marwitz. The spectators sat on a grass plot in front under a tent.

The Margravine has herself given us a description of the Ermitage, as it was that year, 1744, when Richter had added for her the two new wings, on either side of George William's main front. With the exception that some of the furniture and carpets in the Margrave's wing have been altered by later owners and inhabitants, it remains much the same to-day as in her description:

"On entering the wing which I have added, that is to say, into a room of which the ceiling is *en bas-relief* and all gilt, the painting represents the story of Chélonide and Cleobrontas" (from the history of Sparta); "the panelling is white, with gilt moulding; the pilasters and the supermantles are fine mirrors; the upholstery of this room is of a material with an excessively rich blue and gold ground, all the flowers worked in chenille; it is the most beautiful thing that can be seen."

These chairs, of French make, remain, with their damask covers.

"Then comes a little room, with Japanese wood-work; my brother gave it to me; it cost a great amount of money, and I think is the only specimen of its kind which has appeared in Europe; it was given to my brother as such. The ground is powdered with gold, and all the pattern is in relief; the ceiling, the pilasters, everything in the room matches this woodwork; everyone who has seen it is charmed with it."

The decoration of this little gem of a room cost Frederic, it is said, 500,000 thalers. It consists of a quantity of Japanese china *plaques*, finely painted, inlaid into the woodwork, which is richly granulated with gold. Gilt dragons crawl about the frieze and up either side of the little chimney-piece. The card-table of Japanese lacquer dates from Wilhelmina's time. The upholstery is of dark blue damask, run with gold threads.

Wilhelmina loved china, and had her mother's and grandmother's taste for collecting. The Japanese room at the Ermitage is a reminiscence of the china rooms at Monbijou and Charlottenburg.

"Next to this little room, turning to the right, is the Music Room; it is all in delicate white marble and the panels green. In each panel is a music trophy, gilt and very well worked; the pictures of many beautiful people, which I have collected, by the hands of the best masters, are placed above these trophies and set in the walls in ornamental gilt frames. The ground of the ceiling is white; the reliefs represent Orpheus playing on his lyre and attracting all the animals. All these reliefs are gilt. My harpsichord and all the musical instruments are placed in this room, beyond which is my study."

This Music Room—such an improvement on the old one painted on Frederic's table—is a triumph of the artists, Andrioli and the Bossis, uncle and nephew, and superior to their work at the Anspach and Würzburg palaces. The *portières* which damped the tone have been banished, and the white and green marble walls must have lit up splendidly. The design on the walls, soaring turkey cocks in gilt among the music trophies, is original and splendid. The pictures the room contains are most interesting; clever portraits of her female friends, enshrined in the Ermitage, which was her "home"—Sonnsfeld, Dorothea von Marwitz, over the mantelpiece, holding up a mask.

The adjoining study "where I pass many hours in my meditations," is a tiny room, only thirteen feet six by fifteen feet six, "varnished in brown, and painted with natural flowers." A very old *escritoire* of rosewood, walnut and oak, with a flap, is thought to be that at which "I am still occupied in writing these Memoirs." A quiet, almost dull little room, looking out into the shrubbery, with no view, but a peaceful retreat, no doubt.

"The Music Room leads me by another door into the room in which I dress, which is quite plain, and thence I pass into my bedroom, where the bed is blue damask with gold galloon, and the

upholstery in striped satin. My wardrobe room is next door, which is very convenient."

The bedroom and the adjoining bathroom are hung with hand-painted linen. A little table is covered with a bead-work cloth with raised wool flowers, said to be the Margravine's own handiwork.

"The arrangement of the Margrave's apartments (the west wing) is the same as mine, but it is differently decorated. The first of his rooms is decorated with a sort of varnish, which I invented myself; the paintings, which are very fine, represent all the history of Alexander, and I have had it copied from prints by Le Brun; they are, properly speaking, pictures the size of the walls, painted in distemper on paper glued on to canvas, over which I had a varnish put to preserve it (!). These pictures are admired by all connoisseurs. The ground of the ceiling and of the woodwork is white and the decoration gilt, and represents Alexander throwing incense in the fire and Aristotle blaming him for doing it in too great profusion."

No wonder the water-colour painting has not lasted! It was Richter's work, an artist who was also an architect, and who built the additions to the *façade* of the Ermitage. The ceilings in this and the next room are, probably, as the Margravine writes, by Torelli.

"The woodwork of the next room has a dark brown ground; all the reliefs are trophies of weapons of all the people in the world; all this, like the frieze of the ceiling, is gilt. In the middle of this ceiling is Artaxerxes receiving Themistocles. The tapestry is of raised warp, and represents the history of that Greek general."

These gilt trophies of weapons are probably by the same artist who did the music trophies in the Music Room. They show the weapons of all the nations of the earth, and the centre point is a head, representing that of the same race.

"The little room adjoining is adorned with very fine pictures. The panelling is of ebony relieved with gilt ornaments; the story of Mutius Scévola is painted on the ceiling." (The ebony panelling has, alas, disappeared.) "The room next door is covered with squares of Vienna china painted in miniature. The ceiling is all painted, and represents Leonidas defending Thermopylæ. The bedroom is in green damask with gold galloon." (This also has vanished.) "It will, perhaps, be thought odd that I should have

chosen historical subjects to adorn my ceilings, but I like everything speculative, and all these historical subjects which I have chosen represent so many virtues, which perhaps would have been more modernly represented by emblems, but would not have been so pleasing to contemplate. But I return to my description. The house outside is not embellished by any architecture; it might be taken for a ruin surrounded by rocks; it is surrounded by a wood of full-grown trees. In front of the house is a little lawn enamelled with flowers, at the end of which is a cascade which seems cut out of the rock, and which runs down to the base of the hill, where it falls into a large basin. Two walks with large lime-trees edge it on either side, and grass steps have been made in them, in order to go down more easily. There are two resting-places, in the middle of which are fountains surrounded by grass seats to sit on. On the side of the house there are ten walks of lime-trees, so thick that the sun never penetrates. Each walk in the wood leads to a hermit's cell, or to something novel. Everyone has his cell, and they are all different one from the other. Mine exhibits the ruins of a temple, built after drawings which still remain to us of ancient Rome. I have consecrated it to the Muses. There are to be seen portraits of all the famous *savants* of the last centuries; such as Descartes, Leibnitz, Lock, Newton, Bayle, Voltaire, Maupertuis, &c. Next the little *salon*, which is circular-shaped, there are two little rooms and a little kitchen, which I have adorned with Raphael old china. On passing out of these little rooms you enter a little garden, in front of which is the ruin of a portico. The garden is surrounded by a green arcade, where one can lie and read in the most ardent sunshine without being uncomfortable. Mounting higher a new object strikes the eye: it is a theatre, made of cut stone, and with detached arches, so that an opera can be performed in the open air. I shall not stop to describe it. The drawing I shall add to these Memoirs, of all the curious objects in my demesne, will show that it is unique. The river runs all round the foot of the hill; there are paths and magnificent views whichever way you like to walk."

The beautifying of the Ermitage gave Wilhelmina interest, and took her out of herself. But it was expensive work. The want of money began to make itself acutely felt in the principality. Alchemists came and offered to try their hand at making gold! The Margrave was sceptical, but, nevertheless, on their advice he had hidden treasure dug for under the castle. Doubtless, though Wilhelmina did not know it, the Countess Burghaus was draining the Baireuth finances.

The autumn passed sadly enough for the Margravine. She fell ill again of worry and grief. This miserable half-and-half correspondence was trying her more than an open breach. In September Frederic, to help the French, who were being pressed by Prince Charles of Lorraine in Alsace, took the field again, and, passing through Saxony into Bohemia, seized Prague. In the midst of his campaigning he finds time to read, mark and learn the anti-Prussian remarks of Gross, the editor of the *Erlangen Gazette*, about him. He wrote about it to the Margrave; to Wilhelmina he is very scathing:

"I do not know how I have incurred the disfavour of *Monsieur le Gazetier d'Erlangen*, but I know that, in my country, I do not allow any impertinences to be printed about my relations."

Frederic, unable to maintain his Bohemian conquests, raised the siege of Prague. Baireuth hesitated as to which side to lean to. Finally, the Margrave evaded the call made upon him by the Kaiser. So Frederic's New Year's letter to his sister—written by a secretary—was cold and formal, and he enclosed a specimen of the offending editor's literary efforts. The latter was imprisoned; Frederic appeared a little appeased, and a letter of the middle of January is more gentle in tone. He begs for mercy for the culprit, and adds items of forthcoming family domestic events, remarks on the cold of Berlin, and the way people cough in the churches. But he blamed his sister for letting the editor escape to the Austrian camp.

Poor old General von Marwitz did not long survive his eldest daughter's marriage. Frederic had been right. It proved his death blow, and he died the Christmas of the same year. The Margravine had indeed much to answer for.

In January, 1745, the poor sick Kaiser died, and the Austrian luck turned. In June came the victory of Hohenfriedeberg, a great day for the Baireuth Dragoons.

But it was only related to Wilhelmina very curtly through a secretary's hand, and a fortnight later Frederic complained that he had "not had a word from Baireuth for three months." She, on the other hand, complained that he had forgotten her. He excused himself on the score of being so busy, recalled how they parted at Berlin, and is sure of her love in spite of "little passing clouds." Evidently Frederic was softening.

The Margravine, who had let her tongue wag unpardonably with Coblenzel, was again injudicious. She talks seriously of her brother's designs on Bamberg and Nuremberg. The smaller States were afraid of being gobbled up. At the Kaiser's death Wilhelmina actually thought the Kaisership might be "worth a mass" to Frederic. She has completely given up her feelings as Princess of Prussia, she is no longer anything but the sore and heart-broken wife of Baireuth. Her very throwing over her brother for her husband when she had discovered how he was treating her shows her beautiful, loyal nature.

Her line was undoubtedly to blind the world to the real state of affairs. In July, 1745, Count Burghaus, the Colonel of the Baireuth Regiment, joined Prince Charles of Lorraine as he passed through Nuremberg. His wife stayed in Baireuth. On July 3rd, the Margravine's birthday was kept by a novel and brilliant *fête* at St. George's. All the guests had to appear as sailors. The island in the lake was the centre of attraction. On the bridge which led to it from the land were pyramids of coloured lamps, on the island itself was a dining room with sixteen pillars. On each side of this building were large cascades, on the four sides of the island were small ones. The floor was lighted with coloured globes of glass, the walls with scores of lamps. The harbour on the west side was brilliantly illuminated. In the harbour a theatre had been erected on a boat, a stage set and lighted. With a triple salute the company embarked, and landed at the theatre and saw a French play. At

the conclusion of the play, followed an explosion of sea monsters, and out of the middle of the theatre rose a dazzling transparency of the Margravine's name surrounded by fire balls and wheels of fire. Supper was served at three tables, and a ball lasted till four in the morning. The *fête* was repeated four weeks later, on the occasion of the birth of a Prince of Denmark.

At the moment that Frederic was beating Maria Theresa's troops at Söhr, the latter was at Frankfürt witnessing the coronation of her husband Francis as Kaiser. On her way thither she had had to pass through Baireuth territory. A midday rest was necessary. The Margravine took the bold step of calling upon the Empress. Perhaps she was impelled by curiosity, and by a desire to make the acquaintance of so remarkable a woman ; perhaps she was urged by Countess Burghaus, for we find Maria Theresa's envoy at Frankfürt at this time commenting in a despatch on the Countess's influence over the Margravine, and on the former's hatred of the King for having sequestrated her fortune. Frederic did not approve of this call.

It seemed to him a proof of Wilhelmina's Austrian complicity. But the report shows only that the Austrian Court was also trying to explain the Margravine's wonderful forbearance. If Austria had wished to utilise the Countess Burghaus's hatred of Frederic, the Empress would have been informed of it earlier than this. But in Berlin they believed in it long ago.

The King, however, urged on his victorious career, and soon had nothing more to fear from Baireuth or Anspach's Austrian predilections. After the victory of Söhr, however, he cannot resist a jibe, for he informs Wilhelmina a week later : " We have just beaten the Austrians, or your Imperials, according as it will please you to call them." Wilhelmina replies, in no undue haste, and formally, after a three weeks' interval ; but deep feeling underlies her words :

"I cannot often enough repeat to you what I have the honour to write to you very often. My feelings are always the same, and I feel on all occasions the most lively joy at everything happy which befalls you. This last battle puts the crown upon your glory. May it increase. Nobody is more interested in it than I am, who am always accompanying you with my eyes."

Ten days later Frederic, thanking for the congratulations, adds hintingly: "All the family is concerned in the reputation of the nation being sustained."

CHAPTER VIII

THE PASSING OF THE BLINDNESS.

Frederic makes a step towards reconciliation.—Wilhelmina's want of confidence.—Quibbles.—She diagnoses herself.—Mutual recriminations.—Wilhelmina makes excuses.—She lets the tail of the cat out of the bag.—Frederic makes a clean slate.—Prince Henry as go-between.—A gay summer at Baireuth.—Art, and the Margravine as artist.—Frederic diagnoses his sister.—Dorothea to Vienna and Wilhelmina to Berlin.—A disappointing return home.—A visit to Carlsbad.—A moral diagnosis of herself.—Frederic's financial help.—Wilhelmina sees daylight.—The expulsion of Dorothea.—The infatuated Margrave.—Wilhelmina collapses.—Frederic to the rescue.—A scapegoat.

In the late autumn of 1745, when the Prussian troops were in winter quarters, the enemy played the same game that had been played on him. The Austrians, Poles, and Russians made a rush into Prussia, and menaced Berlin. The Austrians and Saxons passed through Baireuth to reach the Voightland and the Elbe. The Margravine did "not write one word of warning as to what was being plotted." Later on, Frederic found time to reprove her. For the moment he was engaged dealing his bold stroke on Naumburg and Dessau's winter fight at Kesseldorf broke through the ring which encircled the Prussian forces, and by mid-winter Frederic had freed himself again. In a cold and satirical New Year's letter he

announces the signing of the Peace of Dresden to Wilhelmina, hoping that "it will be all the more agreeable to her in that her predilections for that Princess (the Empress) will not be encumbered any more by the remains of an old friendship, which perhaps you still keep for me."

Wilhelmina, stung to the quick, replied in as proud and dignified a manner as he would himself have done:

"The peace which you have just granted to the Queen of Hungary is the happiest of events, and I doubt if all your victories do you more honour than the moderation which you show in a moment when you might lay down the law. As to Her Hungarian Majesty, I never had any predilection for her, or devotion to her interests. I acknowledge her merits, and I believe it is permitted to esteem all those who have any. My love and devotion to you, my dearest brother, are not less real, though you make me feel how you deny them; I shall, at least, have the comfort of feeling I have done all I could to leave nothing to wish for on that score."

By this proud answer she gained more than by all her approaches. On the 29th of March he makes the first advance:

"I never suspected your heart of being the cause of the unpleasantness which you have favoured me with the last three years. I know you too well, my dear sister, to be deceived about it, and I throw all the blame on those wretched people who have abused your confidence, and who give themselves a malicious pleasure in embroiling you with people who always love you tenderly. This is what I think, and your letter gives me a chance of saying it. I pity you with all my heart in having bestowed your friendship so unworthily. All the world knows the character of that wretched creature whose name I will not mention, for fear of soiling my pen. You are the only one who has been blind about her. Indeed, my dear sister, you seem to me like the cuckolds, who are the last to know what goes on in their house, while the whole town talks of their affair. Forgive me if I offend you in thus unburdening my heart, but, after the letter you have just written me, I could no longer keep silence. Begging you to believe me none the less, with esteem and affection, &c."

But these were only preliminaries. Dorothea still stood between them. Frederic did not in the least understand Wilhelmina's affection for the latter. His

blood boiled as he thought of her treachery to his sister, and he sequestrated her property. Dorothea was the bone of contention. But his heart went out to Wilhelmina. He knew, he wrote, how easily one is persuaded to what one is inclined to. Frederic made the first steps on the road to reconciliation. He did not have to wait long for Wilhelmina's reply, telling him of the joy his letter had caused her, and reiterating, as ever, her feelings towards him now and always. "You have been more dear to me than life, and the more I have loved and cherished you, the more I have felt your coldness. Forgive me if I speak openly to you. For several years I have failed to find in you the brother I so adore and who was so affectionate to me. I thought his love had died out, and I suffered over it. I made vain efforts to try and regain his heart." Perhaps she had made mistakes, but, even at the worst, she had always been the same about everything which concerned him, and especially about the glory with which he had covered himself. She excused him on account of the stories which had been circulated about her at the Court.

"People do me the honour to treat me as a child, which likes itself to be led by sugar, and to whom one makes believe what one will. Long ago I made up my mind about the libels which were spread about me. A few years ago Supperville directed everything here; then it was du Châtelet, and now Dorothea von Bürghaus, and if she left me some day, it would be another. I should have to give up any intercourse with people if I want to put a stop to such statements. As several persons have been kind enough to point out to me what was being reported about people who are most devoted to me I should have been the most simple-minded of creatures not to have found out the truth, and to let myself be deceived after such advice. I know I am accused of weakness, of unbearable haughtiness, of an intriguing turn of mind, and of an insatiable taste for amusements. These stories went about Berlin the time when I was there, and I am not surprised that such a fine portrait gave you an aversion for me. Those who know me can judge if there is the least feature which resembles me in this picture. Besides, I will give you a description of my mode of life and thought. I am now of an age when one no longer cares about

noisy pleasures; my health, which grows more delicate, does not allow me to enjoy them much. I prefer the society of intellectual people to the whirl of amusements. Neither the rulers of the world, nor intrigues, have any place in our conversations, which are sometimes playful, and sometimes serious. The fools who are not admitted, egged on by their jealousy of talent, wish, perhaps, to revenge themselves at the expense of our little company, and do it a spiteful turn, which it does not deserve. In fact, my dear brother, I and those around me must submit to what is said about us. It is sufficient to be well at Court to have enemies, and it is enough to have enemies to have libellers; it is the way of the world. I hope, my dear brother, that this letter will quite undeceive you about me. As long as I live I will act frankly and sincerely towards you; and I should think I was defrauding myself and you did I act otherwise. Look on the past as on actions which are excusable when you know my heart, and rest assured that I will never give you cause to doubt the tenderness and respect with which I shall be *à jamais*. . . . . ."

Thus lightly, evasively, does Wilhelmina, in her airiest, most tactful manner, throw dust in Frederic's eyes, and in a mass of words accept his proffer of reconciliation, explaining nothing, and not betraying Dorothea. She still looked upon her as a friend.

But Frederic will not be put off with airy nothings. He proceeds, a week later, to put the dots on his "i"'s. He enumerates the causes of their misunderstanding.

"If there has been a coolness between us, it is certainly not I who began it; it was the scandalous marriage of those wretched creatures which first threw the apple of discord. . . Then you allowed a rascal of an Erlangen editor to pillory me publicly twice a week, and instead of stopping him, you let him escape. Since then the Margrave has had a marked tendency for everything Austrian, and, at last, you yourself went and paid any amount of marks of respect to my cruel enemy, the Queen of Hungary, at a time when she was planning to ruin me. Grün's army passed near Baireuth, and if you had had a shred of affection left for a worthy mother and for your family, would not you have written me a word of warning as to what was being plotted? But no, this creature, whom I cannot name without my blood boiling, this Medea, was preferred before everyone else, and as she only breathes out vengeance on me, dragged you on to her side. If at this moment, you were unbiassed, you would not find it strange that such offensive proceedings chilled me. With any one else it would have come to an open rupture, but I have never forgotten that you are my sister, and that I have loved you

tenderly. I never complained of you to anyone. The whole of Germany who saw the harm you were doing to me, also saw the moderation I always exercised. I beg of you not to get any idea into your head about what people say of you. I can assure you I am very thin-skinned on that subject, and anyone who wished to talk of you in terms not sufficiently respectful, would be very ill-received. None blames your amusements; on the contrary we wish you to have more of them, and all the pleasures of life which you can desire. One wishes you to have many intellectual and estimable persons to entertain you, but, at the same time, one wishes to send to hell and all the devils, the infernal pests who embroil you with your relations, and whom I could flay alive without compunction, I, who am not cruel. Moreover, my dear sister, no one takes you for ambitious or intriguing, and those who dare to ascribe to you such attributes must have lent them to you in a fit of liberality, but at Berlin no one thought that of you. Finally, you drive me to extremities, you show me not the slightest affection, regard or consideration, and it is very natural that I grow cold. One can only love those who love us, and the sorrows which come from our dearest relations are always those we feel the most. I have not offended you. I have nothing with which to blame myself, and, in spite of all that has occurred, I love you still. I beg you, my dear sister, to be persuaded that it will never rest with me not to remain, my dearest sister——."

Wilhelmina's health improved under the warm glow of Frederic's reviving affection. He went off to Pyrmont to drink the waters, and to rest after his toils, "making every effort to gloss over the past."

Wilhelmina explained that call on the Empress :—

"As regards my interview with the Queen of Hungary, it was only a mere call of politeness; she passed through this country, where I saw her. A dinner had been prepared for her, and it was very natural that I should preside. We have to deal tactfully with that Court. We are surrounded by her as a neighbour, her troops are perpetually marching through this country. The Emperor had been elected. All these reasons seemed to me forcible enough, especially in a neutral country, to induce me to take that step."

She goes on to say that the interview was unavoidable, and that neither she nor the Margrave is Austrian. "But I can understand very well what gave rise to such reports; we always have about us here a number of Austrian officers, and one must do them the justice to

say that among them there are some who have '*infiniment d'esprit*,' and are very pleasant in society; the Margrave is great friends with some of them, and because he associates with them familiarly, people infer that they are entrusted with business, and are mixed up in it." Finally, the Margravine justifies herself for what is considered her great offence, by saying that she married the Burghaus "not to make her utterly unhappy." That much of the cat allowed to appear out of the bag. Frederic may make what use he likes of the peep.

He did, and the best. He gave way. A week later, May 10th, he says that this shall be the last time that he will write about a matter which is so repugnant to him; and he joyfully effaces all traces of it from his memory.

He himself had experienced "that one is easily persuaded when one wishes to be, and my heart, which pleads for you, finds you innocent, even if my judgment should award you guilty. The trouble you take to excuse yourself is enough, and I am charmed to find once more a sister in the place of an enemy."

During his seclusion at Pyrmont he handed over the further process of reconciliation to his brother Henry, to whom Wilhelmina wrote, recalling the old and common past:

"Long ago the King's love had decreased, but I never could have believed that it was extinct; is it possible that he can behave so harshly to a sister who has sacrificed everything for him, and has ruined her health by the bitter griefs she has endured for him?"

Her mind flew back to the old days, when Frederic himself confessed that her marriage had been made to save him. Now, when that marriage was wrecked, would he desert her?

Prince Henry evidently cleared up everything satisfactorily. Joyfully Wilhelmina told him that the King had written to her from Pyrmont:

"You see then that I knew him better than you others did, and that he only made-believe to be more angry than he was. You can

bear witness that I did not humble myself to him ; I assure you the King would, in his heart, have disapproved of that, I who am no longer his subject."

She wrote again after Frederic's last letter, thanking Prince Henry for his good offices, but standing up for the Burghaus, and begging for mercy for her. Already Frederic has wreaked sufficient vengeance, "a punishment severe enough without his wishing to revenge himself further by blasting her reputation. I am in despair that the King trusts more to the reports of calumniators and of rascals than to those of a sister, who is not idiotic or stupid enough to be so grossly deceived, or to let herself be governed by a young person who has more need of my advice than I of hers." She said she was not blind to faults, but "I forgive them all unless they sin against the laws of virtue or kind-heartedness," and she complained of her mother's harsh letters, which she attributed all to the Ramen, who is her mortal enemy. She wrote that the Queen treats her like a "*bâtarde.*"

Thus matters stood that summer. Wilhelmina retained Dorothea with her, though the Count, her husband, had left, and she stood her ground about her, still blinded and hoodwinked by the unscrupulous woman. But the Margravine felt the coolness of her relatives. Sadly she complained to Prince Henry in September : "I should be delighted to see some of my relations, being quite exiled from the others—but I may not allow myself to hope for such a happiness."

Yet the summer had been gay at "the centre of arts and pleasures," as Frederic called it. Zaghini, the soprano, who had first delighted the Margrave at Bamberg, was now installed at Baireuth, and in splendid form ; Stephanino, the contralto, had improved by a year at exercises, and in Hasse, the fine German singer, the Margravine was encouraging native talent. Delighted, she wrote to Frederic, with reference to Hasse and Graun, that it seemed to be as if art and

taste were about to emigrate to Germany. Yet, like him, she really was of opinion that the initiative in art came from France, that Germany was still in swaddling clothes, and also, like him, she did not perceive the greater initiative springing from Italy.

The Ermitage at the old hunting lodge at Zwernitz, near Kaiserhammer, was finished this year, and the scene of *fêtes*. It was an imitation of the recently finished Sans Souci. It was given the high-sounding name of Sanspareil, in consequence of General Diemar, the Austrian envoy, when there for the big hunt in 1733, having discovered the thick beech-wood, exclaiming, "*C'est sans pareil!*" The old hunting lodge, now private property, has been almost entirely demolished, but in a shady pine-wood may still be traced the alleys, starting from a centre point, and cut through the wood.

Nor were intellectual interests neglected. A weekly paper was started, called the *Annual News from the Realm of Science*; it was literary and not political. The example of the *Erlangen Gazette* was not to be repeated.

The Margrave, who liked indoor as well as outdoor games, invited the celebrated Jew chess-player, Hirschel Baruch, and he took up his residence at the Baireuth Court. In spite of a lavish expenditure at Court on amusements, his father's last words were not forgotten, and the elementary schools were much improved at this time. Yet, extraordinary as it may seem, the next year a servant girl was hung for theft, while an edict of George Frederic Charles's, exterminating sparrows, was revived.

When Christmas drew near, bringing with it the feeling of peace and goodwill to men, the relations between the brother and sister almost returned to their old groove. Frederic sent Wilhelmina a present of a piece of velvet made at the new factory at Berlin, with which she was delighted, as also with the idea of the benefit such an industry must be to Berlin, if it

progressed so rapidly. She sent him "*boudins*" in return, and she added so many kind things about their affection that Frederic said she fanned the ashes, and drew a veil over the interval when the fire seemed to have died out. As a New Year's present he sent her a pastel by his new artist Schmidt.

During 1746 the Margravine, in imitation of her brother, had begun an opera house. An opera house, in contradistinction to a theatre, was something new. This was to be on a grand scale, and worthy of the artists she had collected, and it still remains one of the sights of Baireuth. Out of all proportion to the size of the town, and hardly out-built by Richard Wagner's red brick temple of the Music of the Future, which commands it on the fir-clad hill to the north, its stage is still the third largest in Europe. The Margravine had sent for the Imperial architect, Giuseppe Galli, surnamed Bibiena, from Vienna, as interior decorator. For two years he was domiciled at Baireuth, receiving one hundred gulden a month, with free board and lodging. But Saint Pierre, a French architect, was responsible for the exterior. He was probably hampered by want of means, for the entrance is squat and low, revealing the same faults the Margravine deplored in the palaces of Anspach and Pommersfeld. The façade is of coarse, heavy pillars, half sunk in the ground, giving a severe appearance without stateliness. The Opera House stands close to the river, and flush with the street, and exteriorly is singularly unimpressive and unattractive. Plain wooden folding doors, wide enough to admit sedan chairs and their bearers, lead into a dim, low entrance hall. Bibiena was the Margravine's favourite artist. She gave him a free hand over the interior, in which he surpassed himself. For the next two years the planning and decorating of the Opera House must have been the Margravine's great interest and solace, and it is stamped most distinctly with the impress of her individual taste.

THE OPERA HOUSE AT BAIREUTH, BUILT BY THE MARGRAVINE [*Face page* 128, *Vol. II.*

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But though the Margravine's sphere was small, Baireuth was already acquiring fame in the artistic world. Frederic wrote to her, that at a party at the Queen's, Bassewitz, the Mecklenburg minister, distinguished himself by being on the point of seizing the French minister by the nape of the neck, because he had dared to say that a dancer, who had been thought inferior at Berlin, was at Baireuth: "You lie, sir! Everything is admirable at Baireuth!"

As a New Year's present in 1747, the Margravine sent Frederic a painting, a copy by herself of a Vandyck. Though, unluckily, somewhat damaged in transit, it showed, as Frederic put it, "that it was from the hand of a great master."

"It is too much for you, my dear sister; you should not collect so many talents under one head," wrote the King, suffering from a slight stroke, and a complexity of ailments. "I fear that this painting has done your health harm. A bent attitude is not good for obstructions. Believe me, health is the most precious thing we have in the world. There is an eternity between the man who is sick and he who is well. I have made the unhappy experience. One thinks feebly, one works badly, and one acts worse than both. . . . We are not much, we hang on to life by a hair. . . . And to hear us talk, you would think that we were provided with a body of brass. We get all we can out of our machine, and our imagination, which scours the country, rushes to fling itself into the future, and embraces whole centuries, leaves behind a languishing body which drags itself along, or else perishes."

What a true diagnosis of his sister, mentally and physically!

But though Wilhelmina was now on almost the old terms with Frederic, now softened by ill-health, yet the trouble at home was not allayed. Countess Burghaus would not leave Baireuth, and the Margravine would not turn her out. No plain-speaking of the King's would induce the latter to speak out. She would rather stand confessed a fool than bear the burning shame of an open exposure. She remained dumb. Of course her health suffered. A visit of the Duchess of

Würtemberg hardly tended to improve it, and must have been especially trying for her to bear under the present circumstances.

The marriage of Frederica had been postponed on account of her illness. The "little Venus," as her uncle called her, was only fourteen and still in her *Flügel Kleider*, the quaint dress of eighteenth-century children, with the long pendants down the back, the dress which her mother, at a much earlier age, had been in such haste to leave off. The story goes that the amorous young Duke one day tore them off in a fit of temper, saying he would have no child for a bride. The delay in the marriage gave time "to her dearly beloved husband that is to be to sow his wild oats, and to let off the steam," as the King put it. The Duchess was furious about the delay, and Frederic sympathised with his sister over the *mal à propos* visit." . . The Duchess of Würtemberg alone is enough to bring on a fever and to send the blood to the head of even the healthiest person. . . I pity you with all my heart for being assailed by this fury. It is astonishing that this feminine monster can have given birth to anything as passable as her sons."

The Countess Burghaus, having taken herself off to Vienna — whence there came rumours that she was intriguing against her friend and benefactress—the Margravine decided in May to go and drink the waters at Carlsbad, which even in the eighteenth century was the resort of royalty. Before leaving she sent Frederic a new little French writing case, with the last new fashion in variegated paper and inks to match, in which to write to her from "his solitude of Sans Souci." Society at Carlsbad the Margravine found very distasteful, so many ladies of dubious character, and her brother writes chaffing her as *dragon de vertu*, and cynically taking the part of the ladies in question.

On her return home an unpleasant surprise awaited her. Dorothea von Burghaus was back again, and at

the Castle, ill, in debt, and in a deplorable condition. Rumours of the intrigues at Vienna reached the Margravine's ears, yet even now she will not turn against her friend, will not confess to the world how she has been duped. For to the Queen Mother she writes:

"*Dieu merci*, I have not yet felt the effects of it (the intriguings), and I should be the most unworthy and ungrateful of wives if I did not recognise the attention and the kindnesses which the Margrave has always had for me, ever since I married; and cannot sufficiently praise the happiness I have always enjoyed on that side, of which all the Court and those who come here can bear witness."

She denied all the rumours of the Burghaus ascendency over her, and sadly and kindly says that the doctors have only given the Countess a few weeks to live, that she only sees her occasionally, and that the poor woman does not mix herself up in anything any longer, and is ignorant even of the most indifferent things passing at Court.

At Carlsbad the Margravine had found Fräulein von Tetow, the one called "Finette," a whiff of Berlin, at last, after such a long severance from old home associations. It gave her a great longing to see Frederic, and she wrote on August 4th, on her return home, that she wished her

"dilapidated health would allow me to follow the instigation of my heart, I would fly at once to accomplish my desires. But my obstinate infirmities do not allow me to hope for such a happiness. I should even fear to be a burden to you. What pleasure would a walking skeleton be to you, tormented with a thousand ills, and only well when it suffers less. A breath of air, a drop of dew, upsets in a minute all that art has effected in a long time. In two words that is my portrait. You see, my dearest brother, how very unpleasant it is."

She then gives the description of the female society of Carlsbad, which excited his epicurean moralisings. As to her virtue, she writes, she cannot glory in it. In her opinion that quality consists only in resisting temptations, and as she is not susceptible, or exposed to them, she cannot expect praise for an innate merit.

"Nothing pleases me more than a fine opera, my ears send the soft accents of the voice down to the depths of my heart. A fine garden, magnificent buildings, charm my eyes. But if such pleasures could injure my honour, I would give them up. Thence I conclude that being able to enjoy innocent delights, one can well do without forbidden ones, or, at least, conquer passions to which a sort of infamy is attached when they are indulged in. As for myself, I pride myself on my constancy, and nothing will quench in my heart the feelings of friendship and affection which I have ever for such a dear brother, and which are as innate in me as my very unplatonic coldness."

The letter is quite in her old strain. "Finette" must have finished the work Prince Henry had begun. On August 15th Wilhelmina suddenly surprised her brother by arriving at Potsdam. It was a happy meeting. At last, in his Sans Souci, Frederic found real peace:

"It is not in the mob that one finds good company, and one does not find pleasure when one runs after it; that elusive wanderer does not offer himself; he escapes those who pursue him. Pleasure is for those who have the happiness of drawing near to you, of hearing and of seeing you."

The years of strain and coolness and misunderstanding were passed and gone and forgotten. But Wilhelmina's appearance must have been a great shock to her brother. The "walking skeleton" told him far more than her letters how much she had suffered. She had come to Potsdam because she thought Countess Burghaus dying. She stayed but a fortnight, and received a very tangible proof of Frederic's returning affection. He no longer preached economy and retrenchment to the Margrave and herself. But he arranged a treaty for a loan from France for the Margrave, which eased the money strain, at least for the present. The latter had now quite gone over to his brother-in-law's side. He bound himself not to vote against France or Prussia in the Imperial Diet, or in the Franconian Diet. But these were secondary considerations with Frederic. Though he renounced the Bai-

reuth military contribution due to him, he did it because he wished to help Wilhelmina, and to spare her at least money worries.

For the latter, on her return home, found Dorothea had quite recovered, and was as bold as ever. "New worries will now begin," the Margravine wrote to her mother in September, "and all I have said about her will be thought a ruse." The only grain of comfort was that Count Burghaus had left the Imperial for the Dutch service. A change came over the Margravine. After a long blindness, at last she saw daylight. Dorothea's sister, now Albertine von Podevils, could not make it out. The sisters were used to the Margravine's coldness, but not to her open enmity. The Countess von Podevils wrote to Dorothea in October:

"I must confess, my dear, that I was flabbergasted on receiving your letter, when you told me of the way the Margravine is treating you; I knew there was a coolness between you, but I was very far from thinking that Her Royal Highness would push matters as far as this. *Mon Dieu!* How is it possible for anyone to change so? After all the promises that she has made you, after having bound you to this marriage, of which you would never have thought without her, can she treat you like this? It seems impossible to me that her heart can alter so entirely, and so suddenly; there must be people who are leading her."

Certain it is that, after the Margravine's return from Berlin, she suddenly made up her mind and took action. Some time during that autumn of 1747, probably during the Margravine's absence at the hunting lodge—(taking an interest in sport, as Frederic chaffs her, entirely on account of Folichon's predilection for rabbits)—Countess Burghaus was turned out of the Castle of Baireuth. She fell into fits, declined to see the Margravine, whom she abused, and declared that it was entirely the latter's fault if she died.

On December 2nd Wilhelmina wrote to her brother, Prince Henry: "I have had the very devil of a row with the Burghaus."

Then followed the climax. The infatuated Mar-

grave arranged the house immediately opposite the Castle, where foreign envoys were put up, for his mistress. He furnished it newly throughout, and installed the Countess there!

Concealment was no longer possible. When in Potsdam Wilhelmina had confined her defence for her conduct to her mother and brother to denying the influence of Dorothea on the Margrave. What would they say now?

Wilhelmina determined to be open. To Prince Henry she wrote and complained bitterly, and begged him to advise her, and to send his letters secretly for fear they should be tampered with. She complained bitterly, but was still loyal, and, in the goodness of her heart, made excuses for Dorothea. Though supplied with everything from the Castle, the pampered mistress was discontented, and of "*une impertinence terrible*" to the Margravine, who writes, "You know the miserable state she is in, and how my kind heart and my honour bind me not to abandon her."

Wilhelmina now collapsed under the mental agony through which she was passing, and became so ill that rumours reached Berlin that she was dead, or dying. It is supposed, but cannot be affirmed for certain, that at this crisis her doctor and friend, Supperville, spoke to the Margrave, and said that his conduct to his wife was endangering her life, with what result to himself will hereafter be seen.

Four weeks later, in her despair, she writes to Frederic:

> "I deserve all that is happening to me now. I have made my bed: I must lie on it . . . for the last three years I smothered my trouble. I married her off in the hopes of reforming her, but all to no purpose. I warned her of my anger, I spoke to her about it, and she only laughed. I think now she is sorry she did not make-believe better, but I have too many proofs of her bad character."

She turns to him for help. Since the Berlin visit he had written and acted so thoughtfully and affectionately.

For he had diagnosed his sister and now understood her. He no longer goaded her into speaking out. His riper experience of life showed him that, though her intellect was unimpaired by ill-health, suffering had enfeebled her force of will. Her life, her health is everything to him. Dreadful rumours about it reach him. What

"if they go mad at Baireuth, if they scratch, or sulk, or devour each other, or hang themselves, it matters little to me, provided you are well, and if they shut up Made. Meyer" (he would not soil his pen with her name, we remember) "it would not put me out a bit!"

He tries to make her resigned, and to take things more lightly. No longer cynical or satirical, his letters are bantering, and a deep tenderness and sympathy breathes in every line. He quotes Montaigne to her: "Everything has two handles, one good, one bad; you must take things by the good end, and control a spirit of sadness, because it is a disease which increases and poisons the most beautiful life. . . . Amuse yourself . . . we are only masters of the present moment . . . let's pick the flowers which spring in our steps and not worry about to-morrow." He sends her grapes and pineapples from the Sans Souci greenhouses, each side the long flight of steps. He tried to interest her by asking her to get him old Brandenburg archives out of the Castle of Plasssenburg for the family history he was writing. He was anxious about her "precious health" during the winter, and longed for the spring: he looked upon the snuff-box she sent him at Christmas with the same respect that the Jews regard the soil from the Holy Land, or Christians a piece of the True Cross.

In February she took the step. A noble vengeance it was, an extrication which reflected honour on her heart as much as her head, and not frankly, but feelingly put, in a happily-conceived letter. Every other way seemed blocked. All her own exertions had failed; only Frederic can help. To him she appealed.

"*February* 21, 1748.

"My dearest Brother,

"All the kindnesses you have showered upon me till now encourage me, my dearest brother, to enter with you into an explanation which I always hoped to avoid. Allow me to open my heart to you and to speak to you with trust and sincerity on a subject which has caused me for some years the most mortal grief. How often have I not reproached myself with the badness of my behaviour towards you! My last illness, the nearness of death, deepened my reflections. A close examination of myself convinced me that in all the course of my life I had never been so guilty towards a brother whom a thousand reasons should render dear to me, and to whom my heart has been united since our early youth by the most perfect and indissoluble friendship. Your generosity has made me forget my past faults, but it does not hinder me from thinking about them at every hour of the day. An ill-placed pity, too great a weakness for a person who I thought quite devoted to me, have caused my fall. I have no other plea to make in my own favour, and, if I had not an entire confidence in your kindness, I should not risk imploring you to extricate me from the labyrinth in which I have so ridiculously entangled myself. I have experienced the lot of many highly-placed people; I thought I had found a real friend, a pearl without price for princes; I have been repaid for it by inexpressible ingratitude, and my *amour propre* smarts at having found itself duped, and my heart suffers at being deprived of the only thing which can contribute to the happiness of life. I arranged the fatal marriage of *la Burghaus*, the cause of so many regrets. She has lost all her fortune. She is at this moment in the most frightful poverty, her husband not having drawn any of the pay of his regiment for the last two years, and having nothing of his own. The little that I can give her does not suffice to maintain her away from here. Our temperaments are no longer compatible. Judge, my dearest brother, if I can abandon her in the state in which she is, and dismiss her to beggary, so to say, after the scene I made. I leave this to your decision as to a beloved brother, a real friend, an able judge. I put my honour and my reputation in your hands. No one but you, my dearest brother, can calm my mind and my heart on this matter, by giving her back what her father left her. On this condition she has made up her mind to leave this country, for ever. I implore you with clasped hands to grant me this favour. I will add this debt to so many others I owe you, and I shall never cease, as long as my life lasts, to acknowledge it, nor to be, till death, with the most real affection and the most entire respect, my dearest brother . . ."

This, then, was the way of escape she had found. By this means there is no abandoning an old friend, no

turning her adrift to starve. Yet it is a sure and certain means of getting rid of her, if Frederic will only enable Wilhelmina to avail herself of it.

He did not delay to do so. In less than a week he replied, a letter overflowing with affection and sympathy, with balm for her wounded, disappointed, betrayed heart. He made every allowance, every excuse for her, for he knew her kindheartedness, her loyalty, so rare and, therefore, all the more easily abused. But she is not to regret her generosity; her life is so pure that she has nothing to reproach herself with but the failings of virtue, certainly nothing to reproach herself with towards him. Never will he abuse the trust she has reposed in him, and "I will do all that lies in me to put your mind at rest as regards that ungrateful person." He asks eight days to make arrangements, and ends by preaching philosophy, resignation, to her; he asks eight days and takes only four.

He told Podevils to tell his nephew's sister-in-law that, if she had made up her mind to leave Baireuth, she would be paid the interest on her lawful inheritance. But, foreseeing that the Countess had only made that condition because she thought the Margravine could not possibly carry out her scheme, he warned his sister she might make further demands. Wilhelmina was to turn a deaf ear to a gambling Austrian General, whose pay was always certain, though he lived three times above his income, and who would like to see his wife, who did the same, kept from him. Frederic had his reward in the delight of Wilhelmina's returning health.

A few days after this she wrote to Prince Henry:

"For the love of God, when all is settled up, arrange that the King hurries her departure, for I always fear I may fall a victim to her intrigues. . . . She raised the mask six weeks after her marriage. I then opened my eyes thoroughly about her; she has made me suffer since then the most bitter sorrows."

Since her return from Berlin, Wilhelmina continues, the anger of the Burghaus has increased, for she "had

always flattered herself that the King would not concern himself about her, and that we should again quarrel, perceiving that she could only maintain her position here by means of our disagreement."

Then she wrote to Frederic, March 12th:

"My dearest Brother,

"All your letters supply me with new subjects for gratitude, and you reduce me to reiterated thanks which can only weary you. But your kindnesses to me, my dearest brother, are inexhaustible subjects, and I may compare my feelings about them to eternity, which I cannot define. You have just confirmed the favour you granted me. From what I notice you are perfectly well acquainted with the person in question. Yet I like to err on the side of too much kindness than too much severity. Kindnesses can never cause us any uneasiness, but the opposite conduct may trouble our peace. The Burghaus expects to leave here in May; she will go to Spa, and thence to Vienna."

It was so. Matters were arranged in Berlin, and exit Burghaus, to the "*Amusements de Spa*," as Pöllnitz called his book, and to the accompaniment of Wilhelmina's gratitude to her "guardian angel, a model of virtue."

But another familiar figure left the Baireuth Court at the same time, and that was Supperville, physician, minister, Chancellor of the Erlangen University, "guide, philosopher, and friend." Exchanged with Frederic for a couple of tall recruits, he had proved himself invaluable to the Margravine, and had risen to a position of the highest influence in the land. It is supposed that he left because he had incurred the Margrave's displeasure by his plain speaking with regard to the nervous collapse of the Margravine in consequence of the Burghaus scandal. He went to the less dangerous post of envoy at the Hague, and, not long afterwards, to Brunswick, as physician to Wilhelmina's sister.

When he left Baireuth he probably took with him the original MS. of the Margravine's Memoirs, which is now in the Berlin Royal Library. It was either given him by the Margravine herself that he might insert the

corrections found in his handwriting, and forgotten, or else "bequeathed to him," as his inscription on the outside says, though no mention is made of such a bequest in her will.

This will she made on April 2nd, before Countess Burghaus left, after another severe attack of illness, which greatly alarmed her brother, who wrote anxiously, begging to be allowed to send his new doctor, Cothenius, of great fame at Havelberg, and who was doing wonders for his health.

In the will she left Dorothea a small souvenir, a pair of silver card-table candlesticks, and a golden *étui*. After all that had passed, a whiff of the old friendship surged up in Wilhelmina's loyal heart when she thought it at its last beat; and she wished, at least in the eyes of the world, to part friends.

THE MAGNIFICENT MARGRAVINE

CHAPTER I

POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE

The marriage of Frederica.—Character of the Duke of Würtemberg. —How Frederic sacrificed his niece.—The "doggie" letters.— The opening of the Opera-House.—The Drama at Baireuth.— A brilliant Court, and a sporting Margrave.—The beautifying of Baireuth.—The crowning glory of the Ermitage.

On September 26th, 1748, Wilhelmina's only child was married, at the age of sixteen, to the Duke of Würtemberg, who was twenty.

Charles Eugene was the eldest son of Charles Alexander, who had succeeded his distant relation, the old Eberhardt Louis, whom we saw at the Margravine's wedding. Charles Alexander died young, in 1737, leaving his three sons to the care of their flighty mother, a Princess of Thurn and Taxis. The young Duke had been carefully educated, and had plenty of ability. His faults were rather those of heart than of head, and he inherited his mother's sensual temperament. At the age of twelve he had written a book in four volumes, "*Récit de tous les vices et les vertus!*" During the war of the Austrian Succession Würtemberg remained neutral. Frederic, anxious to secure it to Prussia, sent for the three boys to Berlin to be educated. But their mother, Roman Catholic and anti-Prussian, soon removed them. Then the idea of the

marriage with Frederica was started, and encouraged by Frederic. The Duchess probably hoped to win over Baireuth to Austria.

At the same time came offers for the hand of the "little Venus" from both the King of Denmark, a father's cousin, and from the Margrave of Anspach, her uncle, for their heirs. But her parents let Frederica have her choice. Wilhelmina had seen too much of compulsory marriages, and had grown wiser. The girl not unnaturally, chose the young man she knew, in preference to those she had never seen. It was a good match. Frederica would not have the title of "Royal Highness" by which her mother set such store, but she would reign over a larger territory than Baireuth. As to Charles Eugene, they knew him well, but Frederic sent hints about him.

"I do not flatter myself that he will weave a perfect love with my niece, and I think that the time you gain by putting off their marriage is so much taken off his constancy. As to his character I know that well enough. I hope he may perhaps change."

Yet the marriage was Frederic's own wish and plan. He had promised the dowry and the expenses. How could Wilhelmina do otherwise than acquiesce? But we cannot doubt but that she felt, by the light of her recent experience, more than the usual anxiety, tempered with pleasure, with which every mother marries off an only daughter.

Meanwhile, during that summer visit at the Ermitage the young Duke, always amorously inclined, had fallen quite in love with his *fiancée*. He sent her love letters and verses, and, in fact, behaved in a very different manner to most royal lovers.

In the next year, 1742, the little Princess went on a visit to Berlin. She was growing a very pretty girl. Voltaire called her "the most beautiful child in Europe." The Duke would think of nothing but poetry and dancing and making music with her. After the formal betrothal, in February, 1744, he often came to

Baireuth on visits. But when the wedding was postponed in 1747, on account of Frederica's health, the Duke went off on his first travels, and to Paris. A visit to the capital of Louis XV. could hardly have been a good start for a young man of Charles Eugene's temperament when about to enter the holy estate. His mother also left Stuttgart at that time, which must have been a great relief to both her country and her relations, for, as the King remarked, "her eccentricities indeed deserve that she should be shut up."

On Palm Sunday, 1748, the Princess Frederica was confirmed, a very important event, as it had been specially arranged in the marriage treaty that she was to remain Protestant, though her children, if she had any, were to be brought up in their father's faith. Her godfather wrote, sending, on August 22nd, her dowry, 20,000 crowns, and saying he hoped to do himself the pleasure of coming to Baireuth, if only for a little while. But a week later he wrote again that he was very grieved at not being able to be present at the wedding of his sister's only child. Political complications, his own health, and other people's, interfered. As he would have been very sorry, however, had the wedding taken place without any of the family being present, two of his younger brothers were holding themselves in readiness to start when the Margravine should tell them to come. He did not think the Duke would consent to more than a fortnight's delay. He sent pretty wishes to his niece :—

"I wish her much patience, a fortunate line of descendants, a perpetual good temper, and, more than all the rest, that she may always resemble her illustrious mother."

Which physically Frederica did. Years after her mother's death, when she went to pay a visit to Voltaire at Ferney, the aged sage is said to have burst into tears on seeing her striking resemblance to the friend he had lost. In her youth he had written of her as

"the most beautiful princess in Germany." She surely was also one of the most unhappy. Her foot was so wonderfully small, that her shoes were given to visitors when they left the Court, as a rarity. Count Lehndorff, in his *Journal Secret*, mentions meeting her when on a visit to her uncle at Berlin in 1766.

"I first found her pretty, a moment later I found her beautiful, and scarcely had I spoken to her when I felt compelled to admit that there was nothing in the world more attractive. She is full of charm, has a bosom of alabaster, an enchanting smile—in short, the most perfect princess I have ever seen."

The Duke left Stuttgart on September 16th, accompanied by a suite of fifty-three people. His mother, and the Princes Henry and Ferdinand of Prussia were already at Baireuth for the wedding. A mile out of the town the Duke entered a coach, drawn by six white horses, and headed a procession of twenty-four carriages. The coach had cost 24,000 gulden, and the Court coach-builder and saddler employed forty men to make it. The servants were all equipped with new liveries, and the Baireuth army—Hussars, Musketeers, Militia, and Grenadier body-guard—were all in new uniforms. In order to fire a fine salute, the "gallows hill" above the Brandenburger had been levelled. Upon it a battery was thrown up by the infantry, and posted with twenty-four guns. There had been great fun over the earthworks of the "Stückberg," as it was re-named. Every idler who came to watch the operations was compelled, in consequence of a secret edict of the jocular Margrave, to wheel one or more wheelbarrows full of earth, and the Margrave himself, who was often present, was very amused when some high-born lady had to do her share.

The wedding took place on September 26th, 1748. The contract was signed at noon, and the wedding solemnised by the chief Court Chaplain, Ellrodt, Head of the Ecclesiastical Consistory, at 8 p.m. The bride wore cloth of silver, embroidered with gold flowers, a

[*Face page* 146, *Vol. II.*

ELIZABETHA FRIEDERIKA SOPHIA, DUCHESS OF WÜRTEMBURG, ONLY CHILD OF THE MARGRAVINE

"Nothing in the world more attractive. She is full of charm . . . in short the most perfect princess I have ever seen."

An engraving in the collection of the late Hon. Mrs. Barrell, from a portrait at Baireuth.

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crown, earrings and necklace of diamonds and pear-shaped pearls. Her lady-in-waiting was Frau von Schöning, *née* Pannewitz, from Berlin.

The Margravine had equipped her daughter with a trousseau which vied with that of her grandmother from Paris. There were "dresses of silver and of gold, 5 rich dresses, 6 *andriennes*, 2 *negligés* with Brussels lace, 2 dresses of Brussels lace, 2 *andriennes* with trimmings of blonde." She had many handsome presents, and much jewellery. Among them was a repeater watch, a gold watch, books, plate from her grandmother at Berlin, and a travelling carriage of blue plush embroidered in gold.

At the supper after the wedding there were no less than seven Princes and Princesses present, and they were twice served with twenty dishes, and at last with a *confeckt*, a sort of elaborate wedding-cake sweetmeat, on Dresden china. In another apartment five tables were laid, seating seventy-five guests, who had a *confeckt* representing a landscape with real running water. During supper two Italian singers performed, one probably Moltini, whom the King had sent from Berlin a month before. Healths were drunk in foreign wines from Hungary and home-grown wines from the Main, to the sound of fanfares of trumpets and the booming of guns.

Then came the Fackeltanz, as at all Hohenzollern weddings, and twelve ministers, bearing lighted tapers, led the round. Fifty-six cannon announced the withdrawal of the young couple.

The only thing that marred the festivities was the Margravine's ill-health. She had to keep her room, and could take no part in many of them.

The populace were not forgotten in the rejoicing. On the Herrenwiese, on the afternoon of the wedding day, an ox, two buck, and eight rams were roasted whole and set before the people. Another of the little practical jokes, of which the Margrave was so fond,

consisted this time in an order that no knife was to be used to cut them up, which led to "scenes of great gluttony," and sent the gentlemen from the Castle who were looking on, into roars of laughter, but cost here and there a bloody head in the struggle after the largest portions.

A medal was struck to celebrate the event. In the design we can see the Margravine's hand. On it were the busts of the young couple, clasping each other's right hand, and in their left bearing a flaming torch. The motto round: "If the lighted flames are ten times extinguished, they will only burn the more fiercely."

On September 30th, Frederica left her old home, heading a procession of fourteen carriages, and "weeping violently."

At Erlangen, where the Margrave and Prince Henry met them, they rested at the Schloss, and received from the head of the University an oration on the "Bonds of Love" and the "Duties of the High and Mighty." The students welcomed them with a torch-light procession. At Anspach further festivities awaited them, and eventually they entered their capital under a triumphal arch on which their hopeful citizens had hung the motto: "Those whom God hath joined let no man put asunder." To please the bigoted Duchess they were then married over again by the Roman Catholic Court Chaplain. Wilhelmina, who was always tolerant, would have liked them to have been married originally by him at Baireuth, but Ellrodt had interfered.

To the peaceful months which Wilhelmina spent between the departure of her tormenter and her daughter's marriage, we owe the charming little correspondence between Folichon and Biche. Folichon was her little Bolognese spaniel, a sort of King Charles. Her inseparable and devoted companion, his large dark eyes follow us round the room from Torelli's ceiling at

the Ermitage. He nestles in the folds of her black velvet gown in her portrait, and rests in stone in his mistress's arms in the Temple of Friendship at Sans Souci. Folichon died lonely, his dear mistress far away, at Rome. On her return she reared him a little mausoleum in the model of Virgil's grave, which she built in the Ermitage garden, and there Folichon sleeps in his little coffin in the vault.

Biche was Frederic's English greyhound, given him by his friend, Count Rottenburg. She went campaigning with him, was taken prisoner at Söhr " by Nadasky, when my valet Claus was leading her." Biche died within three years of her correspondence with Folichon. Her sorrowing master sought for sympathy where he knew it would be found, and wrote to Folichon's mistress :

"I have a domestic bereavement which has quite upset my philosophy. I confide all my weaknesses to you; I have lost Biche, and her death has reawakened in me the loss of all my friends, especially of him who gave her to me. I am ashamed that a dog should have so troubled my soul; but the sedentary life I lead, and the faithfulness of the poor animal, had made me so devoted to her, her sufferings moved me so much, that I must confess to you that I am sad and melancholy. Must one be hard? Must one be callous? I think anyone capable of indifference towards a faithful animal will not be more forthcoming towards his own species, and that, if one must choose, it is better to be too feeling than too hard."

Biche lies with Amorelle and eleven others of the Kings's canine friends, each under their own inscribed slab, on the east terrace of Sans Souci, guarded by the lovely statue of Flora, and within sight of their master's library window—the spot where he himself wished to lie.

These doggie letters are delightful. Cervantes and La Fontaine wrote dog talk, but the light badinage, the tenderness, the sound philosophy, which the pair of royal authors put into their dogs' mouths, surpasses all. Folichon laughs at humans, dissects them, finds a resemblance between his own faults and virtues and

those of the bipeds he loves, but points out his own superior constancy and fidelity. "Can one find a more faithful friend then we are? Our love for our masters knows no change, and remains as firm in their prosperity as in their humiliations. Men, instead of despising us, should take us as models." And then he goes on to worship Biche in the most delicate and gallant manner, and to recall her "charming little pawings" when they parted. Since then he has lain languishing at his mistress's feet, and heard her deplore the absence of her dearest brother, and recall the happy time she spent with him at Berlin. Seeing him so sad, "she made me a harem of all the most beautiful lady dogs of the neighbourhood, but I depised them all." He ends by sending the fair Biche a souvenir, a sofa to lie on and think of him, a bowl in which to drink his health.

Biche replies more passionately to Folichon's declarations; she accepts his pretty paw and his presents, and forgives to Folichon what she would not suffer from a middle-class dog. "The great affection of her master for his mistress determines her to take one dog only for her lover." She sings the praises of her master, "who is nearly as reasonable as we are," and then sings those of Folichon's mistress, who is even superior. Her master is so like Biche that it is only because of idle ness and indisposition to run on all fours that he is not a greyhound. But Folichon's mistress is far different, and she flings herself at her feet, and her master too. "He only speaks of her, and it was very difficult for me to comfort him this winter. He received a letter and I saw him terribly distressed. All my little caresses, my little pretty ways, were out of place. I wore myself out trying to cheer him, but he was dead to the world, and I thought I was in disgrace." But Folichon's affection has revived her. "God! what should we be without love!" She preaches resignation and philosophy—than men "let us be wiser, let us not run after the shadow, but seize the subject."

Wilhelmina replies that the letters of Biche gave her more pleasure than those of Cicero.

The same year that saw Frederica married witnessed St. Pierre and Bibiena complete their beautiful opera-house. The latter was so famous that he was given a free hand over the interior. So "he only made slight concessions in his powerful baroque creation to the demand for rococo on this side the Alps." But he and his son Carlo gratified the Margravine's wish for a magnificent style. From the insignificant entrance a wide, double stair leads up into what was then one of the finest theatres in Germany. It appears larger than it is. The architect cunningly used the great depth of the stage to heighten the effect of size. The stage is still the third largest in Germany, forty-five feet high by forty feet broad and fifty-seven feet deep. The house holds one thousand people, and there are three tiers of boxes. It is a glory of rococo art, lavishly strewn with gilt balustrades and scrolls and canopies. On either side the proscenium stand Minerva and Apollo. There is a trumpeters' gallery, where fanfares were blown upon festive occasions. Over the magnificent Royal box runs the inscription, "*Pro Fredericus et Sophia Josephus Gallus Bibiena fecit, Anno* 1748." Strange that so great an artist was not aware of his patroness's name! When he left Baireuth Bibiena received a thousand gulden for his splendid labours and special industry over this building, and also a hundred gulden for travelling expenses. With the lapse of time several beautiful things have vanished—the pair of allegorical figures at the inner entrance, of great artistic worth, and the heavy velvet, gold-embroidered curtain, a work of art carried off by the French during their occupation of Baireuth in 1807–10, and now at the Imperial Opera House at Vienna.

Opera was the Margravine's especial delight. During the next few years, the golden age of Baireuth, she inscribed for her capital a page in the history of

eighteenth-century art. In a small way she competed with Berlin and Dresden. But she could only afford occasional performances and small salaries, and no experienced singers like Poporino and Graun permanently. The floor of the opera-house was free to all citizens.

Next to opera, the Margravine's great pleasure was in tragedies, spectacles, and chamber music, though she never missed an opera, she only occasionally went to a comedy. She was rarely seen to smile, whereas the Margrave delighted in French comedies and their merry ballets, and would laugh out loud, especially when his servants and household applauded with him. He would see the same piece twenty times over, and would not have the curtain go up till the house was packed. There was not so much variety in the performances as nowadays. The plays were all in French, for German plays worthy of the name were not in existence, so the ruck of the audience lost a good deal. Italian singers and French actors were the performers—Drouin, Le Cain, the ugly and insignificant but famous tragedian, Préville, von Gastrollen, the great low comedian. Drouin and his wife received a salary of a thousand gulden a year, an enormous sum in those days. Some single performers received for special performances special remuneration of from seven to eight hundred gulden.

With the opening of the opera-house the rage for theatrical performance seemed to pass all bounds in Baireuth. The Carnival festivities in 1749 began with the New Year, and lasted from Epiphany till Lent. In February a specially printed placard announced to the town that

"His Highness had graciously resolved to make a change in the Carnival amusements: that Sunday was to be the day for holding Courts; Mondays, there were to be plays at the Castle; Tuesdays, masquerades at the *Redoute* Hall; Wednesday, plays at the opera-house; Thursdays, masquerades at the *Redoute* Hall; Friday, operas; and Saturdays, plays at the Castle."

To provide all these performances an orchestra of twenty-seven performers, a picked opera company, and a ballet troupe of ninety dancers were kept. Besides this there were the nine Italian singers of the Court Choir, and thirty-two French actors and dancers.

The first performance in the new opera-house was the "Game of Love and Chance." Bibiena's original sketch for the scenery of the opening performance is extant; it is done in sepia pen-and-ink work. Through the frame of the huge proscenium we see an inner festal hall, his idea being to give the effect of the halls opening one out of the other, an effect carried out to-day at opera balls, but never more successfully.

At the conclusion of the performance the whole house was lit up with thousands of lamps. On the stage the Court supped at a table shaped like an F, and laid for eighty people, off fifty-six dishes and the *Confeckt*. On the floor of the house a supper was laid for thirty guests. During the repast performances and singing took place at the back of the stage.

But the Margrave was equally addicted to outdoor amusements and was a mighty hunter. Though in 1748 falconry, his father's favourite sport, died out, the shooting that autumn in the forests of Limmerswald and Zwernitz in the Fichtelgebirge, and the great drives at the Kaiserhammer hunting-box near Selb, on the Bohemian frontier, were incessant. When the Court took up its residence in one of the several hunting-boxes, the woods resounded for weeks with horns and halloas, and the gaping peasants stared at their ruler and his gaily-dressed huntsmen, triumphantly bearing home the slaughtered boar and deer. Near Baireuth, too, there was game preserved in the park of the Ermitage, and at the Thiergarten. The newly-introduced *parforce* hunts necessitated a large pack of hounds, and a retinue of pages, grooms and *piqueurs*, of huntsmen great and small, riding and afoot, with a commander and a head master of the Hounds. At

first these were all mounted on English horses; then the Margrave began breeding his own.

He had special kennels built for his hundred-and-seven hounds, who all were called by names. He had studs at the Thiergarten, and also at Himmelscron, Zwernitz, and Sparneck. The year of his death he shot 1,383 head of game in the Baireuth forests, and he left 309 guns and matchlocks, 117 weapons, and 78 pairs of pistols. An artist himself, he had his trophies and the scenes of his chase immortalised. Wunder was the name of the Court sporting artist, strange to say, a German.

Wilhelmina inherited Frederic I.'s love of splendour and magnificent ceremonial. Her husband shared her tastes, and wide as poles apart was the Baireuth Court in his day and in his parsimonious father's time. From the moment of his accession he began to increase his state and his household on the model of Versailles. Of chamberlains alone there were twenty-seven, and the Margravine had her own separate household. For their Highness's table there were three *chefs*, two head cooks, four "mouth-cooks," two *ritter* cooks, a cook's help, and one roaster, besides a herd of special artists in *cuisine* of both sexes. In 1750 a Court shipping department was set up for the toy fleet and the sailors on the Brandenburger lake!

The Margravial love of display was also shown in the elaborate costumes worn at Court. The Margravine was very fond of, and particular about, dress, a taste she inherited from her mother, though their tastes differed, as we see in the Memoirs, about hairdressing. Court dress at Baireuth was sumptuous, men and women in heavy silks and velvets, embroidered and laced, the ladies' trimmed with valuable lace, almost sleeveless and very *décolleté*. The skirt was stretched out over wide hoops and valuable jewels were worn, as Frederica's *trousseau* shows.

The concourse of foreigners at Baireuth was very

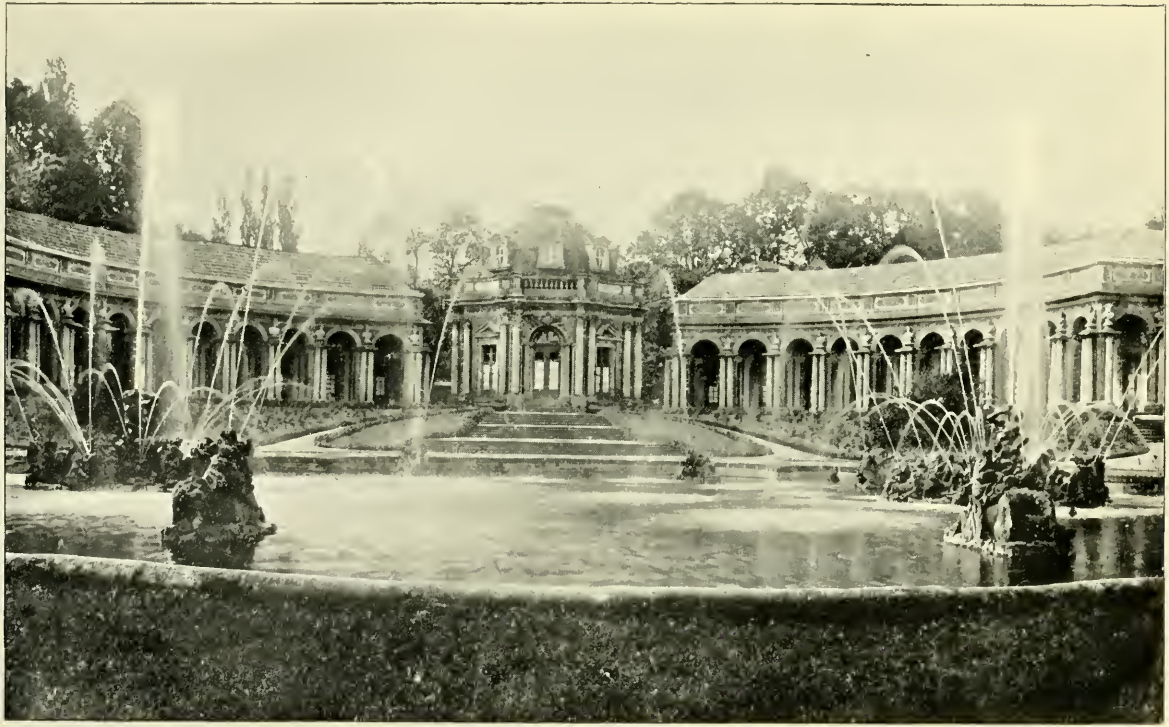
great. Besides the French and Italian actors and singers, the Baireuth Directory mentions artists in colour and in stone and stucco—St. Pierre; Richter, architect and landscape gardener; the sculptors and architects Gontart and Ränz; the scene-painter Guissepipi; the decorators Carlo Galli, Bibiena; the painters Gerhart, Pavona, who painted the Margrave, Roslin, the pastel artist, Torelli, Albini, Andrioli, Bossi, Doldrini, Paluzzi, and the German-Italian artist Raphael Mengs. The Court poets and librettists from the land of the Improvisatores were Galletti and Stampiglia; the composer was Bernasconi. The only Germans connected with the opera were two ballet masters.

Nor was it only foreign artists who were encouraged. The Margravine has told us what she thought of the native nobility, who had never left their country and could only talk of hunting and fishing. Her friendship with Voltaire resulted in an influx of French *savants* and other foreigners, artistic, literary, or even merely wits and good company, on whom were bestowed the highest Court offices. The Marquis de Montperni, a great favourite of the Margravine's, was Deputy Grand Chamberlain and Head Impresario of the playhouse. Count Mirabeau, uncle of the great Revolutionist, was made the head of the Academy of Arts and Sciences. The Marquis Duchâtelet, a relative of Voltaire's "*divine Emilie*," D'Adhémar, the Secretary Voltaire sent the Margravine, Supperville, the Huguenot, were among the principal foreigners on whom, to judge by the lists, were bestowed the Order of the Red Eagle.

Indelibly is the splendour of this reign stamped upon the capital. Margrave Frederic's artistic tastes ran in the direction of architecture. He found Baireuth a town of narrow, crooked streets, still partly surrounded by walls and a dank ditch. Immediately he set about improving it. He removed the deep, dark gateways, levelled the fortifications, and laying out pleasant gardens in the moats, planted the Black *Allée* with three

rows of trees. He offered free sites, assistance in building materials, and remission from certain taxes to anyone who should erect good houses. Chamberlain Reizenstein, who built what is now known as the Duke's Palace, received from the Margrave a gift of two thousand gulden for "such a splendid house." Grael was the architect who designed many of the fine houses in the Potsdam style in the noble *Friedrichstrasse*, named after the Margrave. He lengthened it, removing the gateway to the end, and intended to carry the street on a mile further, as far as the hunting-lodge in the Thiergarten. In the same year that the opera-house was finished, the new theatre was built, and also the Riding School. The right wing of the Government Offices followed, the Mint, and the Assembly Rooms. The barracks were rebuilt and enlarged, the stone bridge thrown over the Main, the Margravial stables erected behind the Hofgarten, and the Roman Catholic Church in the *Friedrichstrasse*. In all this the Margrave himself took a personal interest, supervising, and even drawing or correcting every plan himself. During the zenith of building at Baireuth quite fifty thousand florins a year were spent.

The Margravine's great work of art was begun in 1749. The Temple of the Sun and the New Ermitage took five years in building and cost 94,000 thalers. It is the work of St. Pierre, Gontart, and Richter. To the west, and a little below the old Ermitage, the gardens, the menagerie, the Linden-walk, ten trees thick, were all cleared away. On the site arose a copy of the Temple of the Sun at Baalbec, a summer palace, facing north. It is a circular, dome-shaped building of tufaceous limestone, supported on sixteen columns, incrusted on the exterior with chips of blue, green, yellow, black stones and marbles and crystals from the Fichtelgebirge. The dome is covered with copper and surrounded by a gallery and balustrade. It was originally crowned with a statue of Apollo with



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THE "TEMPLE OF THE SUN" AND THE "UPPER BASIN," BUILT BY THE MARGRAVINE AT THE "ERMITAGE"

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his car, with his horses and the sun in stone, by Petrozzi. But it was too heavy for the roof, and had to be taken down; a wooden copy, bronzed over, by a Nuremberg carver, Mutschler, replaced it; but that, too, has vanished.

The Apollo Temple was the dining-hall of the new palace, and is a beautiful little octagonal building, a mass of marble, crystal, and gilding. The floor is of Baireuth marble. Eight Corinthian pillars of Italian marble, all of one piece, with heavily gilt capitals, each column costing 8,000 thalers, support carved cherubs and a heavily gilt ceiling, from which hangs a crystal chandelier. The walls are of dark marble, decorated with gold *plaques,* representing Ovid's *Metamorphoses.* Between each column are round windows and glass doors, four of which on one side open on to the terrace, whence the flight of steps lead down to the "*Grand Basin,*" where moss-grown sea-monsters in stone still spout water and fling fountains for the delectation of the sightseer.

On either side of the Sun Temple runs a semi-circular building, called the New Hermitage. It is a miniature imitation of the colonnade of St. Peter's, Rome, and is faced with a colonnade of fifty-eight pillars of limestone, inlaid in regular stripes with the same variegated stones and marbles. On the capitals stand forty-three busts of Emperors, by the Milanese artist Petrozzi. Inside, these wings are divided into doll's-house suites of rooms. The one on the left is the Margravine's wing. We see her bath-room with rough marble floor and stucco ceiling, two quaint corner tables and a chandelier in stucco. The-stucco work on the ceiling, by Albani, is gold roses and forget-me-nots.

The room nearest the Sun Temple is very interesting, as it contains Wilhelmina's own collection of engravings, arranged in panels on the walls; one panel of painters and philosophers, *vignettes;* another of Roman Emperors

and mythological subjects, doubtless spoils of her Italian journey. There are valuable engravings of her own castles, Culmbach, Plassenburg, Himmelscron, the old castle before the fire, and of foreign palaces, Versailles, Verona, Italian palaces, and, a reminiscence of the old home, the statue of the Great Elector.

In the first room of the west wing is a picture of Quanz, the flautist, with his ugly little crumpled face, playing, and of the Margravine with Folichon, dressed in a blue gown, and her head covered with a very ugly wig, with white drapery. One of herself at the age of two, wearing a grey gown, a close cap, and an Order! One of Fritz holding a flute.

The next room seems dedicated to the White Lady—her mother, very stout; herself, first as a child in a stiff grey frock and big, round black hat over a wig, and the same large, round mystic eyes; and then grown up, with a wicked face, in dove-coloured dress, with a fluffy wig, pearl necklace and earrings, and a spear in her hand.

A further room, with charming stucco wreaths hanging loosely, has a collection of Franconian and Saxon Switzerland pictures, supposed to be by the Margravine. Then comes her Garden Room.

The idea of "rococo was an attempt to fix passing illusions." The Garden Room, entirely Wilhelmina's creation, shows her delicate fantastic taste. The glamour of the longed-for Italy was stealing into her soul again, that Italy to which she had so much looked forward when the journey thither had been so pathetically frustrated. But now, in the Ermitage, under the guiding hand of the men from the Sunny South, she threw all her aspirations, all her longings, all the feelings after Italian beauty into a little cube on a fir-clad hill in Germany. "*Kennst du das Land?*" the ever *sehnenden* gasp of the German artist soul. On entering the Garden Room one at once leaves behind the stiff and stuffy atmosphere of powder and patches,

curtseys and crinolines. Overhead, a space, tiny indeed, of the "deep blue sky of Rome," peeps through a realistic trellis work, which clothes the walls and ceiling with rich green branches, bearing golden fruit. The leaves are of plaster, but the oranges and lemons are carved in wood; all is modelled, not painted, and waves and hangs, the work of Richter. In one corner stands a little shell grotto with running water; a fountain, from a group of gilt and white marble fish, springs in the rough marble floor; in the opposite corner hangs a little aviary in stonework. The whole, seen by the garish light of day, does not seem out of place, a true test of true art. "It is really baroque, with only a touch of rococo."

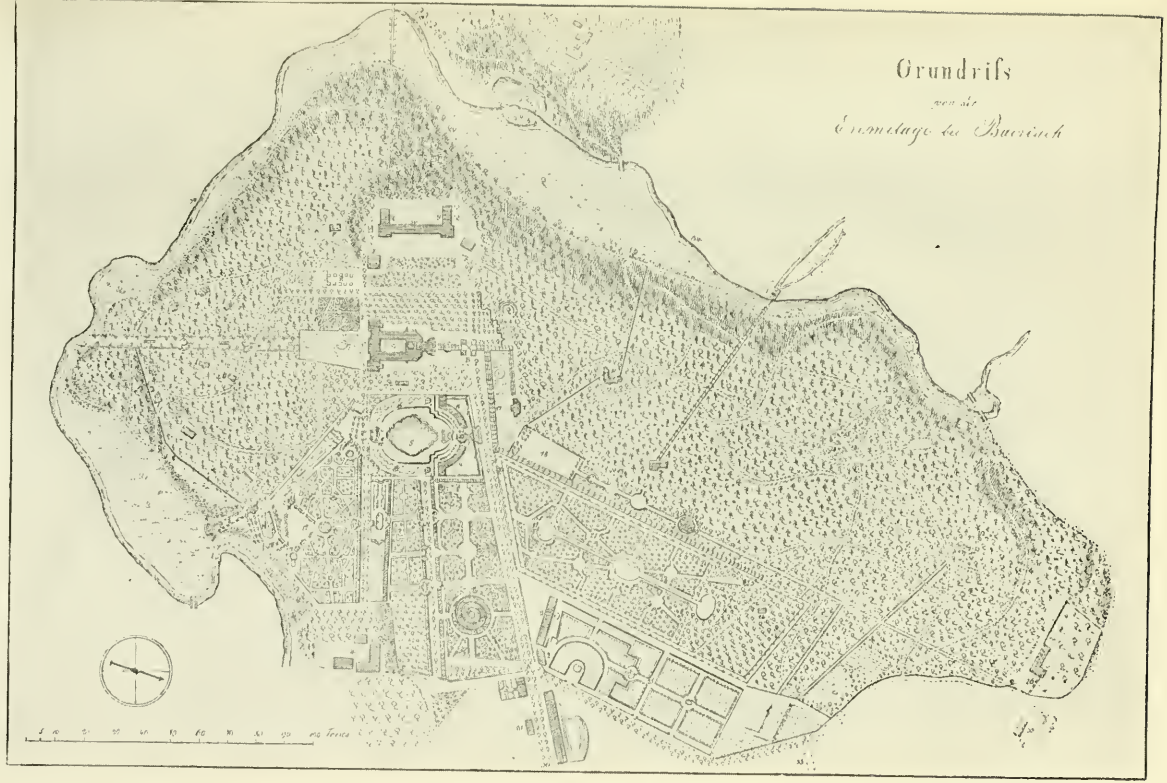
The last room in this wing, called the Margrave Frederic's bedroom, is the one to which Napoleon fled when turned out of the Schloss at Baireuth by the dreaded apparition of the White Lady, who seems to have been a faithful steward in disguise, trying to save the Royal furniture and works of art from any further purloinings.

The Park was in Wilhelmina's day twice the size it is now. When her building operations were finished, the Margravine still amused herself in laying out fresh gardens, walks, and dotting about them ruins, grottoes, and hermitages. After her visit to Italy these took a more classic form. Of gardens properly so called there was but little. The mid-eighteenth century knew not much of flower culture, for it had few flowers, chiefly the old-fashioned violets, poppies, iris, cornflowers, lilies-of-the-valley, garden daisies, gilliflowers, cloves, colchicums, forget-me-nots; their roses were not much more than sweet briars, and bedding-out was unknown. The Ermitage could not show what the cottage garden shows to-day. Round the Upper Basin, in front of the Sun Temple, stood, when the Court was in residence, six hundred orange trees in tubs, many very large, which were kept put away on the *manège*, an empty,

sanded square beyond the green arcades. Numbers of various deciduous trees and conifers, of ornamental shrubs, were planted in the grounds, and the steep descent to the Main is clothed with fir-woods. There were nurseries and fruit and kitchen-gardens, surrounded by the severely clipped hedges of laurel and of beech which are quite a feature ; a pheasantry and aviaries, all more or less still to be seen. The Margrave had his favourite bowling-green, his *manège* and his shooting gallery. Many open spaces of grass or gravel, in various shapes and with various names, and ornamented with columns or statues, dot the grounds and break the woodland. Away on the southern side lay a secluded spot, bearing the suggestive name of The Temple of Silence, given it by the Margravine. Down into a little hollow, buried deep in the wood, mossy stone steps led to a group of columns, some fallen, some standing, and ruined statues, vases, busts. This solitary nook, built in ruins, was intended to represent the mutability of human things. It was a favourite haunt of the Margravine's, we are told, and did not long outlast her.

Not far from the entrance of the King's Way, in the middle of a thicket of bushes, was an artificial hill Wilhelmina named the Belvedere ; through peeps cut in the beech-woods there are charming views of the town, of the wooded hills which frame it, of the rolling country of green valley and meadow, with the red-tiled Franconian villages grouped round cupola-topped church-towers, reminding one of the toy-box farmyards of one's childhood.

There was a quaint little Chinese summer-house, octagonal, pagoda-roofed, and surrounded by a colonnade. The Princess's House, Princess Frederica's, was of wood, and roofed with shingle, but very pretty and comfortable within. A Japanese summer-house stood between the upper and lower Basins, on eight pillars, green with white streaks, and an outside staircase lead-



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PLAN OF THE "ERMITAGE"

From a rare XVIIIth Century engraving.

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ing to the leaden roof, whence was a fine view to St. George's and the Hohenwarte. But only the stone steps and the floor of the grotto which lay beneath it remain. By the end of the eighteenth century the green saloon on sixteen columns, which stood near the arcade, had disappeared, as also the Thatched House, one-storied, thatched within and without and many gabled. Besides all these there were a number of arbours, summer-houses, alcoves, and little huts, dotted here and there ; also groups of statuary.

On the north side of the Upper Basin, backed by trees, stand colossal figures, representing the Rape of the Sabines, executed by Schnegg, a Tyrolese sculptor, and Johann Gabriel Ränz, a native artist, from designs by St. Pierre. On each side of the great flight of steps leading down from the Sun Temple stand eight groups of sculpture, representing the history of Hercules. But the colossal Socrates, in a wooded niche near the Hill of the Muses, has disappeared, and two other giant figures by Ränz which stood near, as well as many other historical and mythological personages in marble among the greenery, and the twelve busts of woodland gods, in niches, in a square, south of the Lower Basin.

Happily, most of the water-works, which were such a feature of landscape gardening of the period, remain in all their beauty, and on Sundays and high days still perform for the benefit of the Baireuth *bürgers* and the Wagner pilgrims. Two great groups of fountains Wilhelmina laid out near the New Ermitage, both designed by St. Pierre. The flight of steps from the Sun Temple lead down to the Upper or Large Basin, in the shape of a circle, with symmetrical bays and points. Two Tritons, half men, half fish, stand opposite each other on each side of the centre of the basin, so as not to interfere with the view from the Sun Temple. From these spring the tallest fountains, and from fifty-six other figures surrounding them, mostly sea-

monsters, moss-grown and brown with age, spout small sprays. The basin was surrounded by a trellis-work and orange-trees, and in the green trellis, in eighteen niches, stood mythological figures by Richter, all in sandstone, each of one piece and costing forty thalers.

The Lower Basin is but a few steps to the west, and is also a beautiful work of St. Pierre's, a parallelogram, one hundred and forty feet in circumference, edged with slabs and surrounded by a sandstone slabbed path. In the middle is a fountain group of nine sea figures; a nymph throws the centre spray from a goblet, and two smaller sprays jet up from her breasts. Four sea-urchins play around, two whales spout through their nostrils, and two sea-dogs eject sprays from their mouths. From the mouths of four mighty sea-horses, one at each corner of the basin, rushes a stream.

Ten alcoves of rough limestone slabs edge the path round the west and south rim of the basin. Each on the west side has a cascade flowing down it; the largest, the central one, has three. In the stone flooring are several hidden pipes from which jets play upon the unwary passer-by who treads on them. On the top of the middle grotto and of those alongside it, twelve whales from their nostrils spout such widely arched sprays on to the sea-monsters in the basin that one can walk dry on the path below. The terrace on the top of the westerly grotto commands a good view of the display.

The great fountain in the Laurel Platz in front of the old Ermitage could be turned in different directions to make different figures. The wood was cut through in a straight line to the Main. It was bordered with fir-trees and trimmed hedges and a long linden-walk. It contained a cascade of thirty-six steps, two fountains, and seven sprays. The steps were in three great divisions, with basins and fountains between

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THE "LOWER BASIN" AT THE "ERMITAGE," BAIREUTH, BUILT BY THE MARGRAVINE

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them, and each division had three little steps, each of which had four others. It had all disappeared by the end of the eighteenth century.

South of the Lower Basin was a tall, thick hedge, with bosky alcoves and four dark cupolas. In the middle lay a round tank with a fountain, and it formed the head of the triangular place made by the Lower Basin and the two rows of statues of woodland deities.

The water for the fountains is brought from the Pensen hills near Seulbitz, and is stored in the tower near the restaurant, to work the 3,000 different jets. The whole of the Margravine's water-works were put in order not many years ago.

afoot for a Carousel, or tournament. The King had chosen the Prince of Prussia, Prince Henry, and Prince Frederic and the Margrave Charles of Schwedt to lead. All July they practised and planned, choosing their knights and squires, their dress and their liveries, and rehearsing on the *manège* at Potsdam and Berlin.

"We shall have in a few days in Berlin," wrote Voltaire, "a Carousel worthy of that of Louis XIV.; people have rushed hither from the ends of Europe: there are even some Spainiards. Who would have said, twenty years ago, that Berlin would become the home of art, of splendour, and of taste? Only one man is necessary to change dull Sparta into a brilliant Athens."

The sage was, as usual, ailing. "The Palace of Sans Souci may be as fine as that of Trianon," but he was ill daily. "I have spent delicious days here," he writes from Potsdam, "and there are going to be *fêtes* given at Berlin which will easily equal the best of Louis XIV."

On August 7th the Margrave and Margravine arrived at noon at Potsdam. "The brilliant era of Louis XIV. beginning once more on the banks of the Spree," writes the delighted and enthusiastic *Frère Voltaire*. The visitors were received most affectionately in the Marble Hall of the Palace by the King and his brothers and the old Prince of Dessau. Frederic led Wilhelmina to the saloon on the right prepared for her, and they had a little talk. Then they all sat down to dinner. No order of precedence was observed, the King sitting between the Margrave and Margravine—"a grand dinner, of which the abundant fruits from Sans Souci, as good as those of Italy, were particularly admired." In the evening the brother and sister once more made music together; there was a concert of the best performers in the Margravine's rooms, and then they had supper quietly alone. The next day there was an Italian *Intermezzo*, in the new opera-house, which Wilhelmina now saw for the first time.

But there was another of Frederic's creations which she must have been longing to see. Sans Souci, begun

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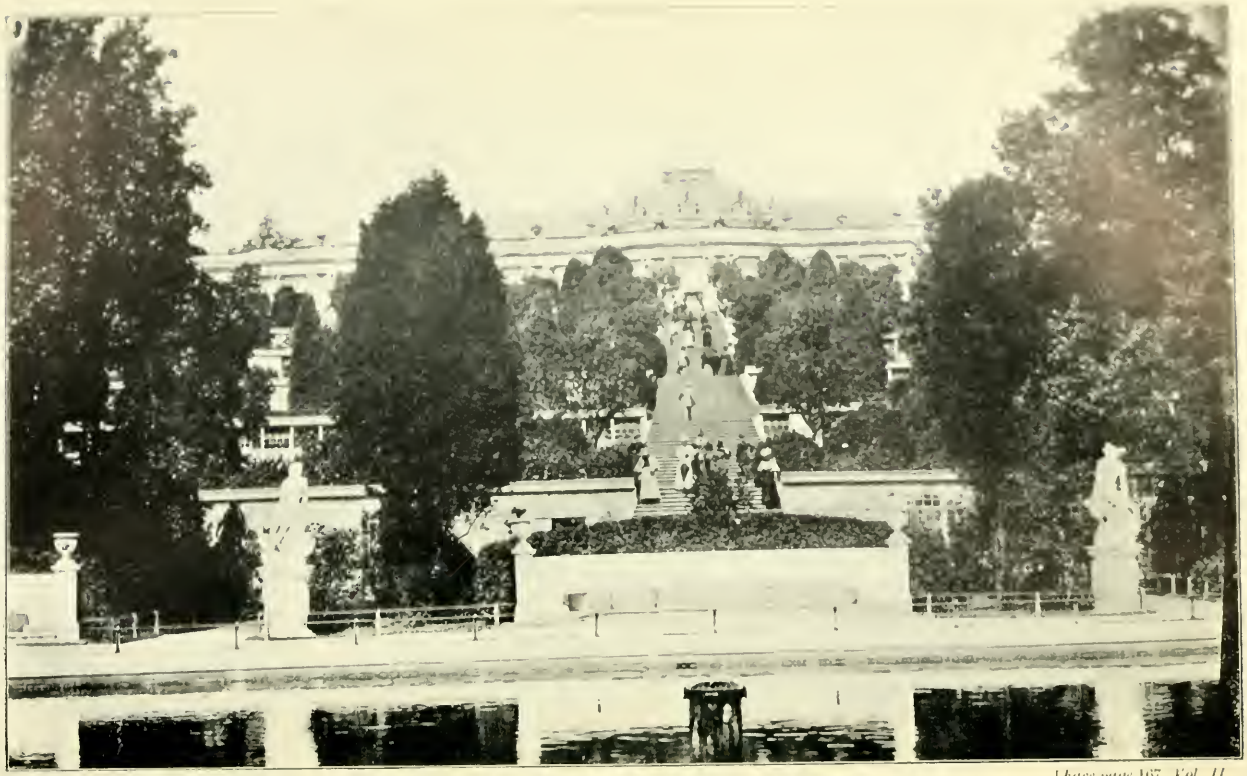

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THE "ABBAYE" OF "SANS SOUCI," OF WHICH "SŒUR GUILLEMETTE" COUNTED HERSELF HAPPY TO BE A MEMBER

in 1742, was now finished. It had been inspired rather from the Ermitage than from Versailles. It is more classic than the latter.

"It is a palace which may be called a '*palais enchanté*,' *tant les ornements de l'art ont secondé les soins que la nature a pris pour le rendre parfait.* Having walked some time in the gardens, they went into the Palace, where the Margravine admired the richness of the furniture and the beauty of the pictures and statues, ancient and modern, and the perfection to which sculpture and painting had risen in France. But what most riveted her attention was the oval marble saloon, the dome supported by Carrara marble columns of all one piece, the bosses and the capital of gilt bronze. Then she was led into the library, next the King's bedroom. The Princess admired not only the rich decorations, but also the exquisite choice of literature produced in France. . . . From the library they returned to the Music Room, where the King's musicians executed a concert, while ladies and distinguished persons sat down to cards."

Supper followed at five tables ; at the King's, covers were laid for twenty-four, at the others thirty.

"From the table the company passed into the court of the Palace, which has a dark colonnade, forming a semicircle, and which was arranged for the ball with a floor, and lit up by thousands of lamplets, arranged in the Corinthian design of the decoration of the buildings.

"The long space which lies between the portico entrance of this court and the hill of the great reservoir was filled by a *berceau* with different arcades hung with lamps. In the distance was seen the ruin the King had built in imitation of Ancient Rome. . . All were lit up, which had an admirable effect. After looking at the illumination, the King wished to open the ball with the Margravine, but that Princess being somewhat indisposed, excused herself from dancing, but the ball lasted till well into the night."

"Youth," Frederic had written the year before to Wilhelmina, "dances till four in the morning. As for me, I let each age have its chance, mine is already getting on" (he was thirty-seven, Wilhelmina forty ! !) ; "my grey hairs warn me that I must bid farewell to folly, illusions, and amusements, but they leave the way open for friendship to run its free course."

The next day the Margrave and Margravine moved on to Berlin, and at Monbijou were affectionately received by the Queen Sophia Dorothea, who lived there

in retirement, and a private family dinner took place. The following day, however, the Queen gave a dinner of thirty in her rooms, at which twenty princes and princesses sat down and dined off gold plate. In the evening the Margravine went to a concert in the King's rooms, and supped privately with him.

The day after the Court moved on to Charlottenburg, which had been much improved by Frederic, Knobbelsdorf, his architect, adding the *corp du logis*. "It is," writes Voltaire, "a delicious abode; Frederic does the honours there, the King knowing nothing of it." Here the Margravine, one is glad to hear, had a day's rest. The next, a grand concert was arranged, and the day following the company was entertained by a play performed by the French actors, called *Le Mauvais Riche*, with entr'acte and ballet, written by d'Arnaud.

On the 18th a great masked ball took place. The guests came by invitation; there was a great crowd, and cards in the Queen Mother's rooms. At 9 p.m. in the deep August dusk, the King led the two Queens and the Margravine to see the fireworks in the garden on the bank of the Spree. Cannon ushered in the illuminations—set pieces, monograms of Sophia Dorothea, and Wilhelmina and the Margrave, flaring up into the summer night. "It seemed as if heaven and earth and water were all in flames."

The Court went back through the gardens, all lit up with lamps, as was the Orangerie, where supper was served at seven tables laid for thirty guests each. The Queen Mother retired to bed, but the King opened the ball with the Margravine, and dancing was kept up till 3 a.m.

An Italian *Intermezzo, Il Conte Imaginario*, with dances and a concert, filled up the next three evenings. In the day-time Wilhelmina doubtless enjoyed much of her brother's society and of that of his *savants*. On the 22nd the Court moved back to Berlin. A truly magnificent performance was given in the opera-house

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[*Face page* 109, *Vol. II.*

A REVIEW AT BERLIN OF THE "GIANT GRENADIERS" BY FREDERIC DURING THE MARGRAVINE'S VISIT, 1750

From a contemporary engraving in the Gallery of Engravings, New Museum, Berlin.

of Lulli's *Phœton*, translated for Quinault by the Italian, Villari. The staging was superb, and the voices beautiful.

"The Palace of the Sun was much admired"—"pillars of transparent crystal with capitals and bases gilt, and adorned with gold and jewels, contained a throne surrounded by emblems of the sun. It threw such a blaze that one's dazzled eyes could hardly distinguish them."

Voltaire was more critical than the local chronicler.

"I have told you that we have had fireworks in the style of the Pont Neuf, and to-day at Berlin we are going to see the *Phœton*, where the scenery will be all of glass mirrors, that every day are *fêtes*, that Arnaud has had his *Mauvais Riche* played, and has been criticised here in general as in Paris."

He thought the *Phœton* caricatured and sneered at Villari, not caring for or understanding music. "I have never seen anything so flat on so fine a stage."

Sunday was a rest day, but on the Monday was a grand review of the Berlin garrison. After a dinner with the Queen Mother at Monbijou there was a repetition of *Phœton*.

On the 25th was the Carousel. It took place in the early evening on the parade ground behind the Castle, which had formerly been the King's pleasure-garden. Stands had been erected for the spectators, and the whole was illuminated with 40,000 lamplets. Princess Amelia, as Queen of the Tournament, and her two maids-of-honour all dressed in cloth of silver, rubies, and diamonds, presented the prizes to the successful tilters at the ring. Her three brothers and Count Ziethen, the cavalry general, received the prizes, which were diamond rings and a pair of diamond sleeve-buttons. Then there was a march-past of the gallant show. The four quadrilles, or sets, as they were called, had been got up by the four leaders to represent "four nations of antiquity." The Prince of Prussia led the Romans, Prince Henry the Carthaginians, Prince Ferdinand the Greeks, Margrave Charles of Schwedt the Persians.

Voltaire made his first appearance in public, since his return to Berlin, at the Carousel, of which he thus writes in a letter to D'Argental :

"It is impossible to describe the Carousel which I have just seen ; it was at one and the same time the Carousel of Louis XIV. and the feast of Chinese lanterns. Forty-six thousand little glass lamps lit up the square, and gave a very distinct light in the lists when the races were run. Three thousand soldiers under arms lined all the approaches ; four immense stands shut in all the sides of the square. Not the least confusion, no noise, everyone sitting comfortably, and attentive in silence. . . Four quadrilles or sets from armies of Romans, Carthaginians, Persians, and Greeks entered the lists, and marched round to the sound of martial music, Princess Amelia, surrounded by the judges, giving the prize. It was Venus bestowing the apple. The Prince Royal had the first prize ; he looked like a hero of the *Amédis*. It is impossible to realise the beauty and the uniqueness of this spectacle ; it all ended by a supper at ten tables, and a ball. It is fairyland. This is what one man can do."

Then, a little later, to another friend :

"I did not see the ball, but the Carousel was worthy of Frederic the Great. I thought I was in fairyland. What I most admired was the order which reigned in a *fête* where there ought to have been twenty broken heads."

The company then adjourned to the opera-house, where there was a masked ball on the stage, which was raised to the level of the boxes, and a supper of two hundred and ten people at seven tables in the great hall.

The following day the Margravine witnessed a performance of Graun's opera of *Iphigenia*, translated from Racine's play, an encouragement of national genius which it is rather refreshing to note after so many performances by foreigners. On the 27th the Carousel was repeated, and by daylight, the lists and the stands being decorated with wreaths. There were fresh prizes, which were again distributed by the Princess Amelia, giving rise to the impromptu by the distinguished visitor, the beheld of beholders, enthroned among the Highnesses and Serenities, his name acclaimed by the crowd.

"*To the Princesses Ulrique and Amélie.*

"'If Paris were recalled to life
To say which owns the brightest eyes,
He would in half divide the prize
And so preserve the world from strife.'

"*To the Princesses Ulrique, Amélie, and Wilhelmine.*

"'Fair Ulrique! charming Amélie! forgive.
I thought to love you only and to live
From other sovereignty free:
Now, with adoring eyes, I see
That sister on whose steps must Love attend,
Sure it can ne'er the Graces Three offend
To love all three!'"

(Hamley.)

In the evening the Queen Mother gave a *fête* at Monbijou, at last, after so many years, doing tardy homage to her eldest daughter. There was first a dinner of a hundred and twenty covers in the Orangerie, and of eight tables holding four hundred people in the trellis-work theatre in the gardens, lit by candles. Molière's *Médecin malgré lui* was performed with interpolated dances and music. The gardens were illuminated, and there was dancing till dawn.

After a few days' rest *Iphigenia* was repeated, and the Prince of Prussia gave a ball, with sixty guests at the Royal supper table. On the 29th, their last day together, Frederic dined with Wilhelmina and the Margrave privately, and Wilhelmina in the evening went to make music and to sup with Frederic. The next day early he left for reviews in Silesia—"a very sorrowful day, but if anything could comfort Her Royal Highness, it was to see how very much the King, her brother, felt this separation."

Wilhelmina poured herself out in verse.

"Sans Souci, 1ier. Sept., 1750.

"O toi, que j'ai chéri dès ma tendre jeunesse!
Frère, dont les vertus augmentent ma tendresse,
Toi que le ciel forma pour régner sur les cœurs,
Reçois ce triste adieu que je baigne des pleurs.

Séjour de Sans Souci, pour moi si plein de charmes,
Je ne retrouve en toi que des sujets de larmes ;
Ton dieu, ton créateur, éloigné de ton sein,
Ne t'illumine plus par son esprit divin.
Pour apaiser mes maux Bacchus en vain s'empresse,
En vain j'ai non recours à l'immortel Lucrèce ;
Je sens que le plaisir me paraîtra souci,
Loin du cher Philosophe de Sans-Souci.

"Ce ne sont point les dieux mais le cœur qui les dicte."

After a few days spent with the Queen Sophia Dorothea, the Margrave and the Margravine left on September 5th for home, "after a most affectionate adieu." After all that had passed in the years which were gone, it is pleasing to think that, in the evening of the proud and awe-inspiring, but courageous Queen's life, she and her eldest child spent a happy time together and parted with affection.

The Prince of Prussia accompanied the Margravial pair as far as Potsdam. But there Wilhelmina, probably overdone by the fatigues of the last month, fell ill with fever. The doctors forbade her to continue her journey, and the Margrave went on alone. For days Wilhelmina lay at Potsdam, getting worse instead of better.

"*Madame la Margrave*," writes Voltaire from Sans Souci, has been pleased to allow me the honour of following her, but unfortunately she has had an attack of fever. If the Master of the house had been here, she would not have fallen ill . . . It rains fevers ; I have two servants laid up and am saving myself by Stahl's pills."

At last the Margravine had herself carried to Berlin, "which she will not leave," says the contemporary chronicler of the past magnificent month, "till she is completely recovered, for which the Court and the town are making many prayers."

Wilhelmina's illness secured her at least the pleasure of seeing Frederic again on his return from his military trip. During his absence she enjoyed Voltaire's acting with Royal and other amateurs in his *Rome*

Sauvée, on the little stage he had arranged in the Princess Amelia's apartments, Voltaire "scolding and all went well." But she was anxious over the illness of the Marquis de Montperni, her own *impresario*, and controller of the household, who had accompanied her to Berlin, an illness from which he never quite recovered.

Then Frederic returned, but their parting was only postponed, and had to be. The anniversary of the Margravine's marriage was kept on November 20th, Voltaire contributing the quatrain :—

"Aujourd'hui l'himen le plus tendre
D'un mortel, a comblé les vœux
Qui peut vous voir et vous entendre
Est, après lui, l'homme le plus heureux."

On November 26th she writes from Brietzen, on her road home to her dearest brother, that she arrived there at four in the morning, "without knowing how I left Berlin. My mind has been so busy and so occupied during the journey, that I perceived it was at Potsdam and not in my body, for I was not at all knocked up, a sign that all my spirit force was not present."

CHAPTER III

BAIREUTH THE BRILLIANT

The friendship with Voltaire.—The Margravine as a composer.—A Christmas surprise.—Ill-health.—Frederic sends another doctor.—Prince Henry's brilliant visit.—Frederic's magnificent birthday present.—Reforms in State and town.—Wilhelmina the consoler.—Family treaties.—Voltaire's friend comes to Baireuth.—A visit to Stuttgart.—Philosophisings from Erlangen.

Wilhelmina had probably enjoyed at Berlin more than all the carousels and operas the opportunity of intercourse with Frederic's brilliant band of *savants* he had gathered round him. In a small way she tried to imitate him at Baireuth. She felt how much she would miss the intellectual atmosphere of Berlin, including especially Voltaire, with whom she had formed a friendship, only to be severed by death. He undertook to cater for the Margravine's mind as he did for her brother's, and Wilhelmina, lonely now, and sickly, needed all the help companionship could give her. The correspondence with Voltaire, hitherto carried on spasmodically through Supperville, now began to be personal.

The Margravine, now so much of an invalid, and deprived by a cruel fate of the society of the two women who had been her greatest friends, was yearning for a female companion of like tastes to herself. At

her brother's Court she met several men of that stamp. Literary herself, and inspired, we may be sure, by Frederic's *History of Brandenburg*, which he was then writing and had doubtless read to her at Berlin, she wanted a literary female companion. But the writing woman existed only in France at that period. In that country there were several shining examples of the species to be found. Could not one of them be tempted to take up her residence at the Baireuth Court, and prove a welcome relief from the Italian and French singers and actresses whose flirtations and quarrels jarred so much upon their mistress? Could not Voltaire find the desired lady?

The Margravine set her affections on Madame de Graffigny, authoress of *Letters from Peru*, a friend of the "divine Emilie." But Voltaire could not persuade the authoress to leave Paris. He wrote to his niece, Madame Denis, in the middle of Wilhelmina's stay at Berlin:

"Madame la Margravine de Baireuth wishes to attract Madame de Graffigny to her Court. I have suggested to her instead the Marquis d'Adhémar. There is no place for him here in the army. Moreover, he must know German well, the least of the difficulties. I think during peace he could do no better than to attach himself to the Baireuth Court. Most of the German Courts are like those of the old knights, at least during the tournament times. They are old castles, and one seeks amusements. There are pretty maids-of-honour and handsome bachelors, and troubadours are sent for. At Baireuth there is an Italian opera and a French comedy, with a nice library, of which the Princess makes good use. I think, in fact, it will be an excellent bargain for which they will both be grateful to me. As for *Madame la Péruvienne*, she will be more difficult to transplant."

Voltaire begged the Margravine to give her up. He will discover someone younger and more lively, not so old and tiresome, a woman of birth and respectability, and send her as his *étrennes*. In the meantime, will she accept a little maniac of a French actor named Heurtaud, that M. de Montperni had retained for the Baireuth comedy?

The Marquis d'Adhémar belonged to an old French noble family, was a poet, and an admirer of Voltaire. He had been much at Voltaire's house the winter before, acting, among other parts, "Cæsar" in "*Rome Sauvée.*" Soon after the Margravine's return to Baireuth Voltaire wrote suggesting him to her, in the first letter of the correspondence they had agreed to keep up when they parted. Nothing throws a better light on the charm of Wilhelmina, and her high character, than Voltaire's letters to her. To others mean, coarse, or grovelling, to the Margravine he writes with a tender chivalry and a delicate friendliness. Her friendship with him brought out the best features in Voltaire's character. He was now chained to Frederic by honours and pensions.

"Great passions lead far, and I should have had the honour to follow to Baireuth the honoured sister of a hero, if the advantage of being near this hero had not kept me still at his feet. Your Royal Highness knows that I was to leave for France on December 15th, but can one have any other home than that of Frederic the Great? There is only one sorrow there, that of no longer seeing there Your Royal Highness. One is consoled at least by the news one has of your health. They say it is getting stronger, and that you have borne the fatigues of the journey well. If Your Royal Highness could have a body worthy of her soul, and a health equal to her beauty, what would then be left for you to wish for in the world."

He goes on to recommend d'Adhémar.

"Deprived as I am of the happiness of passing my life at your feet, and at those of Monseigneur the Margrave, I shall be happy to know my friend is there."

The letters crossed, and the Margravine first wrote on December 10th, 1750, "I have promised you, Monsieur, to write, and I keep my word. I hope our correspondence will not be as meagre as are our persons. . . . I am constantly carried away to your *abbaye*, and you can imagine how the thought of him who is the abbot constantly occupies me." The Margrave had agreed to settle the business of the Marquis d'Adhémar,

and she begged that he might be sent as soon as he could be persuaded to come.

"We have great need of help to fill up our conversational gaps. Our conversations are like Chinese music in which there are long pauses which end in discords. I fear my letter feels the effect of them. All the better for you, Monsieur. One must have moments of *ennui* to make those of pleasure appear more valuable. After this letter the little suppers will seem more agreeable to you than ever. Think sometimes of me, I beg you."

Voltaire wrote back very shortly that it was absolutely necessary for her to have congenial society around her. "The situation of Baireuth," wrote the patriotic Frenchman, "is not *riante*, but wit and the Muses embellish everything." He was working away, seated at his blue velvet and gilt writing table we see to-day, at the *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, day and night. "But I will drive my romance of Baireuth from my head, it is too sad to dream one has a treasure, and to wake up with empty hands." He had written twice to d'Adhémar, but no response as yet.

The *furore* for theatricals and opera which had seized Berlin during her visit had inspired Wilhelmina with another production. She was busy writing the score to Voltaire's tragedy of *Semiramis*, which had been played recently at Berlin. That score is unfortunately lost. Cori, the manager of the Berlin opera, was turning Voltaire's verses into Italian, "or something like it," as the poet rather disgustedly put it, though he affected to see in the "verses" of Brother Cori, the chaplain of the *abbaye*, the sparks of the divine fire of the august Wilhelmina.

Wilhelmina spent a most happy Christmas, for a joyful surprise was sprung upon her two days before. On the evening of the 23rd, a very special performance was announced at the theatre in the Castle. Only select guests were invited, and the audience waited a long time. At last, only at 11 p.m., an extraordinarily late hour in those days, did the curtain rise. To the

astonishment of all present, the young Duchess of Würtemberg stood on the stage, holding her husband by the hand. The visit was entirely unexpected; only the Margrave knew of it; the Margravine was to be entirely taken by surprise. The young Duchess sprang over the footlights into her mother's arms, and amid the deafening applause of the audience that had waited so long, the ballet began.

The arrival of the young couple was, of course, the signal for a whirl of amusements, including, strange as it may sound, bear-baiting! It was a very happy Christmas and New Year, to which, in after less happy years, Frederica must have often looked back with pleasure. Her mother was in good health and spirits, and full of intellectual activity inspired by her visit to Berlin, as her Christmas letter to Voltaire shows.

"*Sœur Guillemette* to *Frère Voltaire* salutations; for I number myself among the happy inmates of your *abbaye* though I am no longer there, and I trust confidently that God will give me a good life and a long one, to go and take my place there again one day. I have received your comforting epistle. I swear by my great oath, Monsieur, that it edified me more than that of St. Paul to the Elect Lady."

(Fancy the horror of the old Chaplain Noltenius if he could have heard Frederic William's daughter thus mistaking St. Paul for St. John!)

"The latter affected me like opium with sleepiness, and prevented my seeing its beauties. Yours has had the contrary effect; it stirred me from my lethargy, and put all my vitality in motion."

Her thoughts were with the

"*beaux esprits* of Potsdam, its abbot and its monks. In return remember sometimes the absent one, and count on me always as a real friend.

"WILHELMINA."

The Margravine was very anxious to secure d'Adhémar, especially as she found her son-in-law, who had known him in Paris, also wished to engage him.

Voltaire replied that he was doing his best. "I wish he would start with my niece and myself, but oh! adorable abbess, if we were all three in your convent, we should never wish to come out."

"Oh! Baireuth! Oh! Baireuth!" he concludes, "when shall I be happy enough to see your *fêtes*, and especially to admire, to worship, to dare to cherish nearer this august princess to whom I present my respect from too far."

The Margravine wrote, towards the end of January, "Your stay in Germany had inspired all hearts with the *furore* for reciting verses." The Würtemberg Court paid another visit on purpose for acting, "the Duke and my daughter acting prettily." The little actor Heurtaud had come, but Montperni was still not sufficiently recovered from his Berlin illness to take the principal part, and the Margravine said: "The rest only murder your pieces." She dared not put on her *Semiramis*, as the Duchess *mère* had had it played in Voltaire's version, at Stuttgart. Her *impresario* being laid by, Voight, his deputy, had chosen the most detestable piece on the stage as regards versification, *Oreste et Pilades*. She concludes by mentioning a guest who would have pleased Voltaire. One of the Pope's officials had passed through Baireuth, but "nevertheless a sensible man, who lashes out against the monks, is superior to all prejudices, and only speaks of tolerance."

Wilhelmina's health failed again as the long winter dragged on to its end. Voltaire, himself always more or less of an invalid, was sympathetic. He wrote that he was urging on d'Adhémar to come, but "that Your Royal Highness had more rivals than she thought, though he fancied d'Adhémar might choose her." If Madame Denis, Voltaire's young and pretty niece, at whose house in Paris d'Adhémar acted so much, was one of them, we may be sure that the poet was sincere in his endeavours to send the Marquis to Baireuth.

"But think, Madame, of your health, that is the essential point. If things went by merit, you would have better health than all the princesses in the world, but unfortunately the greatest qualities are enshrined with you in the most feeble of bodies. . . . Your Royal Highness and the King, your brother, are, I think, the princes of the earth the best provided with mind, and the worst in stomachs. Everything has its compensations."

Himself frail, he hoped to drag himself to Paris, "and I do not think that one can go to Paris by any other road than Baireuth, and my heart, which alone guides one, bids me take that road."

In the Margravine's state of health how cheering would such a visit have been. "You wish so much to see me, I reciprocate your wish. At any time Brother Voltaire would be welcome, no matter what weather," she wrote at the end of February, "and we would try as far as possible to make our abbey agreeable to him. . . Send us soon the Marquis d'Adhémar." She affected to be surprised over Voltaire's lawsuit with the Jew Hirsch about the diamonds.

"You tell me very extraordinary things. Apollo at law with a Jew? *Fi*, sir, it is abominable. I have searched all through mythology, and I do not find any shadow of law-suits in all the proceedings of Parnassus. However funny it may be, I do not wish to see it represented on the stage. Great men should only appear there in all their lustre. I wish to see you there as the critic of wit, talent, and of science, perpetually triumphing over Racine and Corneille, permanent dictator of the republic of *belles lettres*."

For herself, the Margravine fell back upon her books, her silent companions in sickness and solitude. The following sentences to Voltaire, how exactly they hit off the value of her own Memoirs!

"I am reading the Memoirs of Sully, I have run through all those which I have on the History of France. These private memoirs give one a much better idea than general histories, where the author so often attributes great actions, political as well as military, to those who took but little part in them. I have come to the conclusion that you have had very great men, and very ordinary Kings. Henry IV. would perhaps never have reigned, or would not have maintained his position, without Sully; and Louis XIV without Louvois, Colbert or Turenne, would never have acquired the name

of great. Such is the world. Oblations are made to grandeur and not to real greatness."

This was a courageous criticism to the author of the *Henriade*, in an age which almost deified Henry IV.

But Voltaire gave her one back.

"*Frère Voltaire* received yesterday the benediction of Your Royal Reverence. The style of the good old times suits you as well as that of to-day. If the Duke of Sully had known that his waste paper basket and its contents, financial, political and royal, were to be read one day by Madame the Margravine of Baireuth, he would have swollen with vanity to twice his size. I think Your Royal Highness is the first princess to praise the Duke of Sully above Henry IV. For me, weak mortal that I am, I declare that I love the weaknesses of this good King more than all the austere virtues of his Ministers."

Among other things, he goes on, the introduction of silk-worms was due to Henry IV.'s opposition to Sully, and the latter had many lawsuits against Jew army commissaries, so Voltaire must forgive him as he had just won one against a "scoundrel of the Old Testament." D'Adhémar gave hopes of coming, but the lady for whom the Margravine wished had yet to be found.

In May, instead of amusements, Wilhelmina had "julips and pills," instead of "d'Adhémar, she has Cothenius," writes Voltaire, sent by Frederic to see after her health which he had managed so well at Berlin.

"The convent of Potsdam redoubles for you, Madame, its devout prayers, and I, unworthy brother of this Monastery, I am not of those whose supplications are the least fervent. Your Royal Highness knows what feelings I have vowed to her, she knows the empire she has over hearts. I am equally attached to brother and sister. I should like to sing my matins at Potsdam and my vespers at Baireuth."

D'Adhémar could not make up his mind to leave Paris, and still delayed his coming. But Voltaire could only think of the Margravine's health. Why was he not the only one to suffer? He was indignant with Nature.

"Why should such a strong soul be lodged in such a delicate body! At the gate of Potsdam were ten thousand big fellows who could not think and at this moment are firing ten thousand shot. They are in excellent health and Madame la Margravine de Baireuth is ill! And Providence! What is it about? I will not be its servant if you have no health, and I will sing a Te Deum when Cothenius returns!" "BROTHER VOLTAIRE."

Thanks to the care of the great physician, Wilhelmina was able to enjoy the visit of her brother Henry to the Ermitage. As he was so fond of theatricals eight days of plays were arranged for him. The first day was played *Mahomet II.*, a tragedy, with *Crispin, rival de son maître*, a comedy to follow, with two ballets. The next day there was a banquet in the Sun Temple, in the afternoon a walk about the grounds, in the evening a comedy, *La Sérénade*, in the hall of the Ermitage. The third day, a comedy, *Maximinian*, performed in the theatre of the Castle; in the evening a concert at the Ermitage; the fourth day, a banquet at noon, a comedy in the evening, *Le préjugé à la mode*, a Serenade at the Ermitage, and the fifth, a great banquet in the Castle, in the evening the opera, *La Caduta di Alcida.*

On Wilhelmina's birthday Frederic, who was always showering upon her gifts of *bibelots* and of fruits, sent her the most beautiful and costly present, with best wishes and congratulations on her restored health. "I remember to have heard you say last autumn that you longed for some cedar wood to panel a room in the Ermitage. I have found some of this wood, and I take the liberty of offering it you. It is certain that it is from Lebanon, and that the late King Hiram had not any finer." There was no room for it at the Ermitage, and it was put on one side till the Margravine could make plans to use it. The opportunity came promptly, though not in the way she had intended.

The autumn was spent, not to Wilhelmina's taste, as Frederic knows and writes, at Erlangen for hunting, and the Anspachs came. But war thunder was rumbling

again, and military preparations began to take the place of the amusements and interests of peace. The conclusion of an alliance, aimed at Prussia, between France, Austria and Russia, had been followed by a diplomatic rupture about trifles between Prussia and Russia. The Margrave thought he ought to set his military house in order. But the King wrote that there was no need to raise a new regiment, and that for the next two years the Margrave might continue to pocket the 45,000 thalers annually received for the maintenance of his military troops, as there would be no war yet. The Baireuth little army consisted of a body-guard battalion, seven companies of musketeers, artillery to match, and a sort of militia, under the name of "Ausschuss," all maintained out of a population of hardly a quarter of a million souls. The Margrave begged Frederic to send him a certain Major von Bonin to take up the threefold duties of Colonel of Infantry, Town Commander, and Head of the Police. Frederic warned Wilhelmina that Bonin could never get on with anyone, and that the Margrave would not be pleased with him. Indeed his military reforms—such as the alarm-guns to put a stop to so many desertions, the increase of the army and the severer regulations—pleased neither the troops nor the burghers, who were oppressed with the billeting. But, on the other hand, the reform in the watchmen, in the paving and lighting of the streets, the building of a bridge and the general improvement in the town, laid Baireuth under a real obligation to the Prussian official, though the further reduction of the coinage showed how expensive the improvements were.

The year ended sadly for Frederic, sorrowing for Rothenburg and Anhalt and Biche, and annoyed with Voltaire for publishing his satire on Maupertuis, *Akakia*, in defiance of orders. Out of gear with the world, he pours himself out to his sister:

"If there is anything that can comfort me in it it is the share you deign to take in the sad plight I am in."

Wilhelmina sympathised most truly, like a "real friend," writes Frederic. "You enter into my little troubles, you share them, you sympathise with my feelings. It is only a matter indeed of a dog, but all that you write me of Folichon exactly agrees to the case in which I found myself about Biche. Heaven has given us the same temperament, the same heart." Also in other ways he turns to her. Anspach wanted to renew *pactes de famille*, would she help and find out what it all meant? Voltaire was also out of touch with Frederic. *Nos beaux esprits se querellent*, wrote Pöllnitz. The poet was worried, too, about the pilfering of his *Pucelle*, and he also turned to Wilhelmina for sympathy.

Still hoping to pay another visit to Baireuth, he writes that "formerly the virtuosos went to Naples, Florence, Ferrara, now they have to go to Baireuth." He implored the Margravine to take care of her health.

"That is what one must wish for you: beauty, greatness, wit, the gift of charming, all is of no use if one does not digest properly. *C'est l'estomac qui fait les heureux.*"

There had been no news of d'Adhémar for a year! He made difficulties, raised his price, demanded the office of Chamberlain and that of *Chevalier d'honneur* to the Margravine. When at last through Folard, the French Envoy to the Diet and nephew of the Commentator of Polybius, all is arranged, the much desired Marquis fell ill and postponed his journey. Frederic was still depressed. Wilhelmina wrote to cheer him. She is always at her best when mildly chaffing her brother:

"I always regret the time that I pass without writing to you. It seems to me to be lost. . . . I have been deprived of it for a whole week, having the toothache. I cured myself most comically. I was advised to smoke certain herbs, which at first soothed me; but as I was obliged to repeat the remedy several times, my ladies kept me company, and we smoked like dragoons. You see, my dear brother, what with my natural courage and my genius for war and the new accomplishment I have just acquired, I might become a great general. But a doubt still is left me, for I have never found in history that Alexander or Cæsar smoked. However that may be, it has been

foretold me that I shall command an army in the course of this year. I am so proud of this prophecy, and so credulous, that I only read books now which deal with the art of war, and in order to learn tactics I arrange baubles and gewgaws for the opera. Forgive me these sillinesses ; moralising and seriousness are natural for you, so I must seek out something new to prevent my letters being dull."

On the Margrave's birthday *Denkalion and Pyrrha* was put on the stage with a hitherto unequalled setting. There were thunder, floating in the air, all sorts of scenic effects. More to the Margravine's taste was the performance of Voltaire's *Mahomet*. At last she had a Voltairian tragedy acted to her satisfaction. "The actors surpassed themselves," she writes enthusiastically the next day to the susceptible author, "and you have had the glory of moving our Franconian hearts, which resemble the rocks they live in."

D'Adhémar was expected daily. Voltaire, however, was "a sort of Tantalus. You flatter me with the promise of making a visit here, and when I expect to see you, my hopes vanish," she writes.

The poet wrote to the Margravine and asked her to find out from her brother the cause of the change in his behaviour to him. If the poet had not merged himself in the diplomat, matters could have been arranged. But Frederic, with great enterprises on hand, would brook no intriguing, and Voltaire's host of enemies at court added fuel to the flame, or rather froze the ice which was gradually spreading. Loath to risk losing her friend, Wilhelmina did not want to be mixed up in the quarrel. She wrote, but knowing she could do no good, and so waiving the matter airily aside. She wrote from the Ermitage where she was leading an out-of-door life, "dividing my time between my body and mind; one must keep up one to preserve the other, for I perceive more and more that we only think and act according to how our machine is working."

Voltaire was hermitising at Potsdam during the festivities of the wedding of Prince Henry to the

Princess of Hesse Cassel. Wilhelmina rebukes him mildly with a wisdom of an experience deeper than his own. "You have become very misanthropical, it seems. You stay at Potsdam while the King is at Berlin, and you fancy that a philosopher does not suit a wedding. One can well see that you have not tried marriage, and that you do not know that one of the essential points of the holy estate is to be a good philosopher, especially in Germany." Montperni sent messages, but he was so busy and "lives like a monk to try and get well." The Margravine only saw him one moment of the day. "He was the best item of our little society. I hope D'Adhémar will suplement him." She begged Voltaire to send her Bayles's *Esprit*, which the King said he was going to have published in Berlin. A supplement to that savant's dictionary she has just received from England seemed to her not to reproduce the original.

At the end of June the family treaties between Brandenburg, Anspach and Baireuth were renewed, and are known under the title of *Pactum Fridericianum*. The two Margraves were anxious to be more closely bound to their important relative, and Frederic was only too pleased, not that he much feared Seckendorff's supremacy at Anspach, "if the Court of Vienna pays him a big price it is indeed very ill laid out, for he and his Court are not worth bribing."

In June, 1752, the long-expected came, and the friend of Voltaire became the friend of Wilhelmina. Voltaire, grumbling and misanthropic from his "cell" at Potsdam, writes that she now found he did not make bad presents. Still devout to his goddess he asks "would she like a reader with a chest and a mind unwearіable, a theologian who did not believe in God, as learned as La Croze, as fat as him, eating just as much, serviceable and cheap? He could procure Her Royal Highness such a one." He was suggesting the Abbé de Pradés, who had fled to Berlin because of the con-

demnation of his work by the Sorbonne, and who became reader to the King. He was the *Frère Gaillard* of the *Bande*, but the King said afterwards he "deceived him cruelly" by intriguing with France during the War.

In the late summer the Margravine paid her daughter a visit at Stuttgart, and then returned to Erlangen for the usual autumn hunting, and her sister and the sporting Margrave of Anspach joined them. Voltaire had sent her a "little book of Devotion which I have written for my right reverend Father in God the Philosopher of Sans Souci. I beg your Royal Reverence not to allow a copy to be made." (He remembered the fate of the *Pucelle* at the Ermitage.)

"The mysteries of the saints must not be exposed to profane eyes. This pious manuscript is in very small writing, but she can have it read to her by M. le Marquis d'Adhémar or M. le Marquis de Montperni, deacons of the church. . . . I hope to make a tour in Italy and see the underground city. But before going to see what is underground I intend to pay my respects to what is most adorable above ground, and to renew to Your Royal Highness and to Monseigneur the profoundest respects and the ardent devotion of *Frère Voltaire*."

Wilhelmina's most susceptible and versatile mind was always affected by its surroundings. A stay in the University city made her philosophical and argumentative. In this mood she replies to Voltaire's gift. It will be remembered that she gave as the subjects for discussion at the opening of the University, "Matter can think." Voltaire made the same assertion, following in the footsteps of Locke, who held Spinoza's theory. The latter was of opinion that "mind and matter are one and the same thing, and that the supposed difference between the two proceeded from our own limited understanding. But Locke went a step further and maintained that the intellectual activity of men was caused by impulses of the functions of the human body." It is still a moot point, as it was in that day, and hundreds of years before.

"ERLANGEN, *November* 1, 1752.

"One must have more mind and taste than I have to adequately praise the work I have received from you. One must expect everything from *Frère Voltaire*. The fine things he creates no longer excite surprise, for admiration has long succeeded to astonishment. Your poem on Natural Law has delighted me. Everything is to be found in it. The novelty of the subject, the elevation of the thoughts, and the beauty of the poetry. Dare I say it? Only one thing is wanting to make it perfect. The subject requires a larger sphere than you have given it. The first proposition demands above all a more ample demonstration. Allow me to be informed, and to tell you of my doubts.

"God, you say, has given to all men justice, and a conscience to warn them, as he has given them what is necessary.

"God having given to man justice and a conscience, these two virtues are innate in man, and become an attribute of his being. It follows of necessity that a man must act in consequence, and that he cannot be either unjust or remorseless, not being able to fight against an instinct belonging to his essence. Experience proves the contrary. If justice was an attribute of our being, trumpery quarrels would be banished; lawyers would starve, your councillors in Parliaments would not be busy as they are in vexing France for a piece of bread given or refused; the Jesuits and Jansenists would confess their ignorance with regard to dogma.

"Virtues are only accidental and dependent on society. Self-love has given birth to justice. In primeval times men tore each other to pieces (as they do in our day), there was no security for home, no safety for life. *Meum* and *Tuum*, distinctions made too much of in our time, rendered all union impossible. Man enlightened by reason, and urged by self-love, at last perceived that society could not exist without order. Two feelings forming part of his being and innate in himself caused him to become just. Conscience was only a consequence of justice. The two feelings of which I wish to speak, are an aversion to suffering and love of pleasure.

"Truth could only beget sorrow, tranquillity is the mother of pleasure. I have made a special study of sounding the human heart. I judge by what I see, of what has been. But I bury myself too deeply in this matter and might well, like Icarius, find myself precipitated from the heavens. I await your conclusions with impatience; I shall look on them as oracles. Lead me into the paths of truth and rest assured that there is not one more clearly defined than the wish I have to prove you that I am your sincere friend

"WILHELMINA."

On her return to Baireuth she wrote in a more pseudo-philosophical style to Frederic.

"I quite agree with you, my dearest brother, and am sure that our soul is the servant of our body. I feel it daily; my soul (if I have one) is always fixed near you, and my wretched body stays here without being able to follow its directions. I am always cursing it for being made of flesh and bones, and not like that of the sylphs who can move themselves in an instant from one place to another. I have to take out walking for some hours daily this frail individuality, in order to have subsequently the power of thinking and meditating. But in spite of all my reflections, I do not yet know where I am. But I notice, nevertheless, that when I am most suffering, I do not feel the pain when I can fix my thoughts on some object which is worth concentration. It is true that the alleviation is only temporary, as the springs of the machine, wracked by pain, cannot endure a long concentration. I perceive, alas, that often I do not see an object which enters my range of vision, or hear a sound which strikes my ear; I do not think of it or notice it. I deduce from that that it is only meditation which crystallises the ideas which the senses communicate to me. This conjecture makes me think sometimes that there is something more in me than my body; but I find, on the other hand, so many contradictions that I return from that to the other system. Won't you say, my dearest brother, that I am as good a philosopher as I am a great general, and that I had better hold my tongue, than to talk to you of my cruder dreams."

Frederic replied, that if any being was worthy of possessing an immortal soul, it was her, and if any arguments could make him turn that way, it was her mind. But he prefers to think that Nature has made an exception in her case. For himself, he knows not "whence he is, nor whither wending." He blesses Nature for having favoured him at his birth with a sister who alone can be the comfort of his life, of having given him estimable relations, and not given him a restless spirit difficult to satisfy. "This is my little confession of faith, not like that of Augsburg, or the catechism of Calvin." To pass from philosophy to *pompons* he sends her as Christmas presents ornaments for her dress, and a necklace, knowing that though a "great philosopher and general, she will be unable to avoid spending an hour a day on her toilette."

CHAPTER VI

"DOWNCAST BAIREUTH"

The burning of the Castle.—Second sight.—A hero's sister.—Frederic's help.—Wilhelmina the mediator.—A last visit to Berlin.—The break in the correspondence with Voltaire.—The Margravine as librettist.—The rebuilding of the castle.—Frederic's last visit.—Ordered south.—Frederica's matrimonial infelicity.

At eight o'clock in the evening of Friday, January 26th, 1763, the Court painter, Wunder, was hanging two pictures he had painted for the Margrave in the latter's private room. This was on the third floor over the grand staircase in the inner wing of the Castle. While the painter was at work the Margrave lighted him with a wax candle; when he went out of the room he put it down, without thinking, on a lacquered table. After a little while the candle burnt down into the table, and set it on fire and the curtains caught. The flames spread to the nearest pieces of furniture, and in a few moments the whole room was ablaze. The sentries and others smelt the fire and called the Margrave's attention to it. The latter, however, hesitated to hand over the keys, an incident which was afterwards noted, and commented on. So no endeavours to extinguish the fire were made till the flames had already burst from the window and reached the eaves. The hard frost which prevailed at the time hindered all the efforts

of the well-trained watchmen and servants. The water froze in the pumps and the hose, while a bitter east wind fanned the flames with increasing force. People lost their heads and flung the furniture out of windows, including the mirrors.

When the fire broke out, the Margravine was ill in bed, and she had to be carried over the burning rafters into the Marquis de Montperni's house. The conflagration lasted for twenty-four hours. According to the lucubrations of a contemporary poet, who indited verses entitled :

"DOWNCAST BAIREUTH!"

The Margrave orders gave and cried to Heaven,
"Oh! Lord! But spare each burgher, spare the town."
He prayed, "Ah! only save my House of God!"
And it was done, the raging flames died down."

By the beginning of the second night the four wings of the castle, the neighbouring church, and the new playhouse were all in ashes—only the octagonal tower was, strange to say, standing. In order to save the outside wing, the sixth, which was nearest to the town, on the third day the burning fifth wing was destroyed by cannon fired in the castle yard.

The Castle Church which adjoined the Castle had shared its fate, and lay in ruins. Subsequently, when the *débris* was being cleared away, a leaf of the altar bible was found lying intact upon a stone. It was charred and burnt, and only one verse was still legible, the last of Genesis xxviii :—

"And this stone which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's House."

While some historians saw in this extraordinary coincidence the handiwork of Court officials, the Margrave interpreted it as a supernatural hint, and decided that the church should be at once rebuilt with the utmost haste.

The fire had been foretold. The day previously, the

little daughter of the Margrave's head forester, von Schauroth, at Heinersreuth, a few miles from Baireuth, stayed out in the garden at dinner time, and, in spite of the bitter cold, would not come in, because, she said, she must watch the big fire at the castle. Others who ran out could see nothing, not a trace of any fire. But the girl, with outstretched arms, stood gazing anxiously towards the town, describing how large the fire was. At last her face lightened. Joyfully she exclaimed that any danger for the town was over, and that Baireuth was saved. The next day, at the same hour as her vision, the fire broke out!

How did the Margravine bear this terrible catastrophe and sudden shock, which would have unnerved a less frail woman in the best of health, much more a chronic invalid on a bed of sickness, who had been subjected to a sudden removal through flaming rooms, over burning beams, and some distance down the street on a bitter winter's night. But Wilhelmina proved herself the true sister of a hero, and, in an emergency, not lacking in the calmness and courage of her race. Her letter to Frederic the next day is nothing less than heroic:

"27*th January*, 1763.

"My dearest Brother,

Your maxims and your lessons have been a great comfort to me in the sad plight in which I find myself. They have taught me to place myself above the reverses of fortune, and to face with courage the occurrences which do not affect affection or friendship. We are utterly ruined. Last night at eight o'clock the castle caught fire, nearly in three different places. There is every appearance that it was set on fire on purpose. I was very ill in my bed, they rescued me in the middle of the burning beams. I have saved my dog, my jewels, and some books, but I do not know what I have kept, or what I have lost. The Margrave has saved nothing from his rooms. The whole castle is in ruins, only one wing was spared, otherwise all the town would have been in ruins. I am in a house, without knowing where to find shelter, nor where to retire to. But I am calm, and reflect that one can live happily in humility as in abundance. My library causes me the most sorrow. I shall lead a dull life; I shall be deprived of the only company I

had. Here is a jeremiad! You will forgive it, my dearest brother, in consideration of the confusion in which I am."

Four days later she wrote again, and from a private house,

"surrounded by luggage and things which have been saved. We do not know where to lay our heads, being unable to leave this place as the presence of the Margrave is necessary. I have found a portion of my wardrobe. Much furniture, jewels, and china has been burnt. The Margrave has lost everything that was in his rooms. He regrets very much his flutes and his music, especially as he has no possible amusement to drive away his trouble. I venture to beg you, my dearest brother, to send him a flute and some concertos of Quanz. To judge by appearances, the Castle was set on fire by an incendiary. What we feel most is the disagreeableness of the people who would not give any help, but ran away and hid themselves, in order not to be obliged to work. Only the soldiers, the household, and the foreigners rescued from the fire the little which is left us. Forgive me, my dear brother, if I entertain you with this sad occurrence; it is the great piece of news, and I hear of nothing else, my head is quite confused with it."

Again, a few weeks later, she joyfully informs Frederic that her library and her music books have been saved in the most wonderful way, and only her luxuries are gone. But "I only saw them for a minute of the day and enjoyed the others." She regrets the loss of her theatrical wardrobe more than that of her knick-knacks, and adds a graceful epigram:

"My stage army will, in future, look more martial; hitherto they have resembled the army of Darius, now they will be more like Alexander's soldiers."

But nothing matters except how Frederic takes things: "Thy friendship remains to me, and I am richer than Crœsus."

In the *Éloge* which d'Adhémar, the Comptroller of the household, wrote of the Margravine, after her death, he thus refers to this catastrophe:

"A fearful fire consumed (26th January, 1753) the Castle of Baireuth, and many valuable effects. Their Highnesses faced this sad occurrence as one of those blows of fortune which should not

crush courageous souls. Their first thought was to console their Court."

A few days after the fire Frederic wrote to his brother, the Prince of Prussia :

"It is not on account of any special attribute of our family that you will find so much courage in my sister of Baireuth; it is, my dear brother, by means of philosophy that she raises her soul above the misfortunes to which the human race is exposed . . . it is only the loss of people that one loves that are real and irreparable."

To Wilhelmina he wrote at once with intense sympathy but, "if only the fright has not injured your precious health, I see that everything else can be remedied." She was to write to him frankly, and at once, and say what she needed, and what he could do to comfort her. The courier would return at once, and he would do all that lay in his power to give her marks of his affection. He was as full of confusion and consternation as she was, but he saw that all the losses could be repaired. He begged for news of her health, and was concerned about her lodgings. He would willingly offer his house; unfortunately, it was not near Baireuth. "*Adieu, ma chère sœur.* For God's sake save your own self, that loss would be irreparable."

Five days later, he wishes he had

"the lyre of Amphion; I would send it to the Margrave that he might rebuild his castle with the help of its harmonious sounds. Instead, I send him what I have, which is a flute which has the gift of softening sorrow and of distracting from the misfortunes which happen to us. I have hastily picked out seven concertos, which I add, and I will continue every day by post to send you others. See, my dear sister, how far my impertinence goes; I have heard that the Margrave has lost all his shirts, and as I think he will not at once find linen fine enough, I venture to send you some from Silesia which has just come to hand. . . What comforts me in these sad circumstances is the noble way in which you have borne the misfortune which has happened to you. . . What is most annoying is the upset it causes in your mode of life. Tell me about your library, your trinkets, everything that you have lost, that I may, on my part, repair your losses in some way. If you knew how heartily I do it you would not grudge me this pleasure, you would even add to it."

A week later, aware that, though all her jewels and clothes are saved, her pocket money must be gone, he sends her a present of money, as he knows how she must be pressed. Later, he offers her some of his theatrical wardrobe to equip the operas she was getting up. As an immediate shelter the Margrave and Margravine lived in the house of Privy Councillor Meyer in the Rennbahn, near the newly-begun Reformed Church. Later they moved into the Meyer house in the Friedrichstrasse, near the Post Stables, now the mess-room of the *Chevaux Leger*. Six years later the owner, Johann Gottlob von Meyer, married Wilhelmina von Schauroth, the Heinereuth prophetess.

With regard to the cause of the fire, we have seen that the Margravine ascribed it to incendiarism. The Margrave was most popular and beloved, but the people —not the Baireuth burghers, whose pockets were filled by the expensive Court—were jealous and angry with the preponderance of foreigners appointed to official posts, and who drew enormous pay. On the other hand, there were not wanting persons who, as we have noticed, thought that the Margrave had been very long in handing over his keys when his room was on fire, and remembered that he had made plans only the year before to rebuild the Castle as it was so small. St. Pierre, and Montperni, architect and Director of Buildings, wanted to pull a whole wing down and rebuild it at the cost of 150,000 florins, and doubtless influenced the Margrave.

Frederic wrote within a month suggesting plans for rebuilding the Castle. He thought forty or fifty thousand crowns would do it, and that sixty thousand would replace the furniture, which had been valued at a quarter of a million. He offered the loan which the Margrave requested, and most willingly, writing that he had never touched the treasure his father had left, and it was unconditionally at his sister's service, Though not suggesting economy, or venturing to put a

curb on her extravagant tastes, he recommended that as both she and the Margrave were so inexperienced in business, they had better secure some tenders, and hand over the contracts to honest people.

But St. Pierre and his compatriot, Montperni, backed by Gontart, got round the Margrave. By the beginning of February they brought him new designs and plans and estimates worked out by Gontart, giving the idea of a new castle on a new site, and the technical details were handed over to the Court builder, Proll, a native of Baireuth.

The Margravine, we may be sure, was only too willing. She had now seen, and stayed in, many fine castles. Her only attempt hitherto at building had been the fancy country-house style of the Ermitage. She now wished to erect, as well as her means would allow, a palace. Thus the new castle was begun, while, simultaneously, the old one was rebuilt. At the same time a new theatre was begun, and the Margrave bought Meyer's house, where he was lodging.

In spite of Frederic's loan, all this could not be done without money. The treasury was already exhausted, so a poll-tax was put on everyone all over the country, high and low, civil and military, burgher and peasant. For this purpose a census was taken in order to apportion the tax correctly. This poll-tax, to rebuild the Castle, remained a permanent tax, and, in an increased form, lasted to the time of the last Margrave.

Of course, it was to be expected that Wilhelmina's health would suffer from the shock of the fire. Frederic was horrified to find her going in for a quack cure in the spring, and wrote begging her not to play experiments on herself, and sent Cothenius to her. She amused herself by making a memento of the catastrophe at the Ermitage. The mirrors had all been thrown out of window in the confusion and smashed. The Margravine had the pieces collected and set all over the ceiling and

the walls of her study, which gives a cheerful, if *bizarre* effect, in that dull little back room.

In Berlin there had also been conflagrations at Christmas time. Frederic had wreaked his vengeance on Voltaire for publishing his *Dr. Akakia*, by causing it to be burnt by the public hangman. But the bonfire in the Castle square on Christmas Eve consumed not only the book, but the last vestige of the friendship between the King and the poet. By the end of May Voltaire had shaken the dust of Berlin from off his feet, and had reached Frankfürt on his way to France. Early in June an imploring letter from prison reached the Margravine, signed: "*Helas c'etait autrefois Frère Voltaire*," and describing his arrest by Prussian officials the night before, and enclosing a letter for the King, begging that he might be set at liberty.

Very diffidently Wilhelmina sent it on to her brother. Pouring oil on the troubled waters, at the end of a long letter all about her health, she adds :—

"I am sorry that he has appealed to me, for fear of being compromised in this unhappy business. I send you, my dear brother, all the letters I receive from him. If he had followed your advice he would have acted more wisely. I think him the most wretched and despicable of men if he has been guilty of disrespect to you, either in writing, or by word of mouth; such an action can only draw down on him the contempt of respectable people. A man as excitable and sickly as he is piles one imprudence on another when he once begins to commit himself. His age, his infirmities, and his reputation, which is tarnished by this catastrophe, fill me, however, with some pity for him. A man reduced to despair is capable of anything.

You may think, perhaps, my dearest brother, that I have too much leaning towards him because of his genius, but you will not disapprove of my having for him the pity one owes to all unhappy people, when they are unhappy, and even if one is obliged to punish them. His fate is like that of Tasso and Milton. These ended their days in obscurity, and he may well do the same. If the labours of poets to make epic poems turn their heads, we may well be deprived of such poetry in the future, as it seems to bring them bad luck."

A month previously, Frederic, in an angry descrip-

tion of Voltaire's sayings and writings, had clearly shown his sister his feelings about the quarrel. He wrote that he should not be sorry if the departing poet should go home by way of Baireuth, as then he, Frederic, could send and fetch the insignia of office, and especially the King's book he was carrying off with him, and of which he might make a bad use. But Wilhelmina had no intention whatever of allowing the disgraced favourite to establish himself at her Court. She was at one with Frederic over his behaviour, yet she pitied her friend more than she dared show, and tried to plead his cause with the angry King.

"The letters he has written to his friends here (which are written in confidence and only shown to me on my urgent entreaties) are very respectful on the subject of yourself. He gives you justly the title of great man. He complains of the preference shown to Maupertuis, and of your prejudice against him. His sarcasms in the letters are very spicy, and I confess, my dear brother, that I could not help laughing when I read the letters, for he writes in such comic ways that one could not remain serious. I will not fail to let you know all I hear about him."

But her pains were all thrown away. Frederic said that Voltaire lied, and would not hear a word in his favour.

Dr. Cothenius had arrived at Baireuth and put the Margravine on a cure of herbs and then of the waters of Eger. Being consequently in better health, the Margravine, in spite of having no castle, received a party of distinguished guests in May and June, and entertained them at the Brandenburg. The Anspachs came with their son, and the Margravine's uncle, the Regent of Schleswig, and his wife. There was great shooting for the gentlemen in the Limmersdorf Forests, and on June 30th a magnificent *fête* at St. George's. It began with a Turkish procession, the Margrave, his guests, and courtiers being dressed in Turkish costumes, masks optional. The Margrave was the Sultan, the Margravine of Schleswig the Sultana, her husband the Grand Vizier, the fat Count Löwenhaupt the Mufti.

As favourite of the Sultana was her Royal Highness, drawn in a little carriage decked with flowers, a zither in her hand, and surrounded during all the *fête* with disguised slaves. The soldiers of the Infantry Regiment, who formed a line for the masquerade, were got up partly as janissaries, and partly as slaves, dragging their chains. There were beautiful fireworks on an island in the lake, and a building of trellis-work, lit up by countless lamps, represented the Castle of St. Angelo in Rome. But as the Chamberlain, Baron de Tubœuf, a Frenchman, arranged some illuminated transparencies representing too personal allegories, he fell into disgrace.

In the autumn Wilhelmina paid what was to be her last visit to Berlin. It was a quiet visit, "no ceremonies, not anything to *gêner* her;" operas, of course, and intercourse with her now large family circle. There was the Queen's Mother, her shadow not grown less; Princess Amelia, living with her at Monbijou, the Queen a nonentity; the Prince of Prussia's boys, growing quite big; Prince Henry's bride, a new sister-in-law, the pair an extravagant couple like herself and the Margrave, always in money difficulties, and now busy making Rheinsberg more beautiful than ever.

But there were war clouds rumbling. The French and English were wrestling in the Hinterland of the American colonies for the supremacy of the Latin or Anglo-Saxon races in the New World; and only the spring before, Frederic had discovered traces of a, to him, most dangerous alliance, afoot between Austria, Russia, and Saxony to dismember his upstart, overbearing kingdom, and cut Prussia down to an Electorate of Brandenburg again.

But it was a happy month for the Margravine, and over all too soon. It was her last sight of her native land and of her mother and sisters. That she felt the parting, Frederic's letter after her return in November shows.

"We do not bid an eternal adieu, I beg you not to distress yourself. We will see each other again. . . Rest assured, my dear sister, be quite certain that if you have a true admirer, if you have a devoted friend, if you have a brother who thinks very tenderly about you, it is, my dearest sister, your very faithful brother and servant,

"FREDERIC."

And this the King "of the sharp, mocking tongue, and pricking into whatever displeases him . . . treats almost all the world as slaves . . . . Spandau very full!"

During the Margravine's stay, D'Argens wrote to D'Alembert from Potsdam that "Voltaire made several attempts to return here, but the King would not hear his name mentioned; he made use of the Margravine of Baireuth and the Duchess of Saxe-Gotha to make his peace."

Voltaire wrote to the Margravine from Strasbourg, an exaggerated letter, boiling over with anger, malice, and all uncharitableness, and smarting under his imprisonment, hinting at what the world thought of the King's action, but imploring her to

"listen to your heart alone, it is to the King's heart alone that you will speak. Mine will ever be filled with the deepest and most tender respect for your Royal Highness. Your Royal Highness, does she permit me to throw myself at the feet of Monseigneur . . .

Jadis Frère Voltaire."

But all in vain. To Frederic he was never again anything but that. On the part of Wilhelmina there ensued a dead silence, for, in the April before, Frederic had written to her:

"As for you, my dear sister, I advise you not to write to him personally. I have been caught by so doing."

A hint which Wilhelmina took. Never again was she to be deluded by misplaced friendship into quarrelling with Frederic. For four years she ceased writing to Voltaire.

In the beginning of 1754 Voltaire wrote again from Colmar, and sent her a book, *Annales de L'Empire*, just published, for Frederic. "Brother Voltaire was always the same, he had only changed his cell." He entreated her, "whose hands beautified all they touched," to present this humble work to the King. He enclosed copies for D'Adhémar and Montperni. The King acknowledged his copy stiffly through the Abbé de Pradés, his reader; "so as not to compromise himself," he wrote to Wilhelmina.

The winter that ensued was a busy one operatically with the Margravine. A great loss, however, was the departure of Montperni for Paris. He had never really got over that illness at Berlin, and, like the true Frenchman that he was, he pined for the *pavé*. With him he took the silver melted by the fire to the value of many thousand gulden, in order to have it worked up again in the latest Parisian taste.

Inspired by Frederic's *Montezuma* which he had sent her, the Margravine was busy on the libretto of her opera *L'Ouomo*. She wrote it in French prose, and the Court poet Stampiglia turned it into flowing Italian verse. The preface is more interesting than the piece. In it the librettist herself says that the allegory, for it was no more than that, follows the general idea of the Italian *festa teatrale*. Light and Darkness, Reason and Passion, with their accompanying throngs of good and evil genii, dancing and singing, strive for the supremacy over a pair of mortals. Reason rightly triumphs, but the authoress, at the conclusion, does not disguise her fear "that this stage triumph will never take place in reality."

A pretty little story probably belongs to this period of dramatic activity at Baireuth. The Margrave, who, as we know, loved practical jokes, announced that the Margravine would herself appear in a play, and with a pair of live young wolves. She was led across the stage, on the arm of the Margrave, to a cupboard placed there.

From out of this came two dear little children, who clasped her knees. They were the children of a Government clerk and of a burgher named Wolf.

The new castles were rising apace. Buildings which stood in the way were pulled down. The new Reformed Church, specially ordered by the Margrave only in 1745, was bought up, and rebuilt on a site in the Erlangen Strasse. He was also busy building another hunting-lodge at Kaiserhammer, and cutting down wide drives in the forests for the *parforce* hunts.

In the spring of 1754 Frederic began to "make his little plans" for a visit to his sister. "No roads and no weather shall hinder me when there is a question of rejoining you." On June 14th he arrived at the Ermitage. He came "for you alone, and no tragedy, or anything else, will give me as much pleasure as seeing you yourself." He begged for "no ceremonies, no banquets," for nothing which would distract him "from seeing and hearing you." He kept his journey secret till he reached Halle, and brought only a small suite. It is pleasant to think that this last time the brother and sister were together, they spent in peaceful and quiet days with each other, only the Anspachs and their son being invited. No Voltaire, no theatrical star distracted their attention from each other's companionship. Frederic was delighted with the Ermitage, now furnished. He several times remarked sadly that he regretted that he could not move it to Berlin. With the new castle, now to a certain extent above ground, he was not so well pleased, comparing it to a "stable." The entertainment which pleased him most, probably, was the production of his hostess's opera, which had been set to music by Bernascini, and he especially admired Bibiena's scene of a palm-wood.

Only six days could the King give to Baireuth. He had made a great effort to see his sister, urged by gathering war clouds, and his increasing anxiety about her health. He left her sorrowfully, and with forebod-

ing fears, determined to dispatch Cothenius again. Wilhelmina made him promise to give messages to the Queen their mother, to whom she was too ill to write, and to remember her to all her friends at Berlin. As for Frederic, he wrote the day he left that he "would retain all my life the souvenir of the happy days I spent with you, in which the only thing wanting was to see you in perfect health. My body leaves you, but you keep the heart of him who will be to the end of his days, my dearest sister. . . ."

Very sad and pathetic is Wilhelmina's letter of June 25th.

"My dearest Brother,

"You have carried off with you my heart, my joy, my health. It seems to me that I only languish now that my beneficent star has vanished. I passed the day after your departure in bed, and directly I felt a little better I hurried into the room you had occupied. I went round all the places where I had been so happy with you. My sister came. Our mutual tears mingled . . . she and her son will stay a little longer. But all that is not the dear brother."

The result of the doctor's visit was that the Margravine was in a decline, and a winter in the warm climate of Montpellier was ordered. The journey so tragically interrupted fifteen years ago was now to take place. All the spring the invalid had been yearning for the south—for Italy. The journey thither made by the Duke and Duchess of Würtemberg the year previously had filled her with envy. The dream was now to be realised. It would be economical, as they would go *incognito*, and thus save the expense both of the Court and of a suite. In view of the building of the castle and the numerous other outlays, this was an advantage not to be lost sight of. For the Baireuth finances were indeed in a bad way. Seckendorff was making mischief between the two Margraves, writing to Berlin about the immense debts "of Baireuth, that Anspach could not collect what the sister principality owed her in spite of the excessive new taxes daily imposed upon the

people," in such a manner that many of them had been reduced to despair and to extremities. But the King was very severe upon "the wretch," who "deserved to be shut up in a mad-house . . . an honest man would have shown that the journey my sister is making to preserve her health is very advantageous for the Margrave of Anspach himself, for, if my sister happens to die, he of Baireuth might marry again, and then good-bye to the succession! Do not speak to me any more about the business."

At this time the Margravine had the misfortune to lose her Controller, *impresario*, architect, and stage manager. Montperni died in Paris, and with him vanished all traces of the silver he had taken thither! The Margravine felt his death acutely. He had been a faithful servant, and a congenial spirit in her "little society." Frederic condoled; he had, in the last four years, lost so many friends; and "nice people," he wrote, "who are also honest, are not usually to be found." The Margravine had a funeral service for the deceased Marquis, who was a Roman Catholic, performed at Baireuth, a *Castrum Doloris* being sung by the whole Court orchestra and choir.

Montperni's place was to a certain extent filled by Count Mirabeau, uncle of the "Hercules of the Revolution," then seven years old. But Mirabeau had not the Marquis's versatility. Frederic recommended his sister to secure the Chevalier de Folard, French envoy to the Diet at Ratisbon, when he should vacate that post. But Folard did not come to Baireuth yet.

But ere Wilhelmina could flee away and be at rest, she had yet another trouble to go through. Suddenly, in September, the Duchess of Würtemberg came flying, an injured and jealous wife, to her parents for protection. The notorious infidelity of her husband had wounded her beyond endurance. Charles Eugene, as his guardian the King had already written dubiously of him before his marriage, "had become his own master

in an age when young men's education properly begins. He found a Court full of flatterers and toadies, dangerous seducers, and capable of corrupting hearts more firm in virtue than his could be. In short, all these circumstances together have contributed to his lapses." He might have added to these the bad example of his notorious mother, and the tendencies inherited from the "Laïs of her century."

Even during her honeymoon Frederica became jealous, a joke of the Duke's with a Baireuth Court lady giving her the first cause. As time went on she took too much notice of her husband's flirtations, not being endowed with the philosophic resignation which her uncle preached, and which her mother had so painfully acquired. Of a gentle, rather colourless disposition, and with a strong religious feeling, which increased with years, she inherited neither her mother's consummate tact, nor her art of managing men. The coldness between the pair increased. Charles Eugene had artistic and intellectual tastes, but the journey the young couple took to Italy, and which it was hoped might draw them together, and wean the Duke from some of his attachments, only widened the rift. The Duchess could put up with the state of things no longer, and, as we have seen, rushed back to Baireuth.

Two days after her arrival her husband came to fetch her home. But no appeals and protestations on his part, or of her father and mother, could induce Frederica to return with him to Stuttgart, and the Duke, in the worst of tempers, went back alone next day. To start for the south, leaving matters in this state, was impossible for her parents. After much difficulty they succeeded in effecting what was, however, to be only a temporary reconciliation. Frederic was not as hopeful of the result as was Wilhelmina. He sent indeed the Duke's brother, Prince Frederic, from Berlin to act as mediator, but to his own sister

the author of this ill-starred marriage wrote a cynical letter, which must have given her but cold comfort. On the subject of passion Wilhelmina had nothing in common with him.

"I must tell you frankly that your daughter would do better not to be jealous. When this passion of the Duke's is over, another will succeed it, and then another; so she had better make the best of a thing she cannot alter, and only try to keep the Duke's affection and trust. They were married much too young; the Duke was madly in love with her, but more as a jealous lover than as a husband, he sowed his wild oats all at once. Then ensued the consequences of enjoyment—satiety and disgust. He seeks a change, and from all appearance will continue to do so. Perhaps he may have a few moments of a return to his first love, but a volatile heart never gives up the habit of inconstancy."

Hardly consoling this for Wilhelmina, and a sad send-off on her journey.

CHAPTER V

FORETASTE

The surprise visit to Voltaire.—Wilhelmina mediates again.—To Lyons.—An ecclesiastical atmosphere.—A false rumour.—Wilhelmina in Provence.—On papal soil.—Interesting human relics and Roman remains.—The volatile Margrave.—To an ancestral possession.—Novel interests.—A Riviera sea-trip.—The "city of palaces."—A drive through Tuscany.—"*Firenza la bella.*"—Frederic's warning.—The Margravine seen through English spectacles.

Travelling in their own carriages, and with their own horses, a large retinue, and an immense amount of baggage, the Margrave and Margravine left Baireuth on October 10th, 1754, for the south.

Passing through Erlangen and Anspach they reached Stuttgart, where they dined privately with their daughter and son-in-law in the old mediæval *schloss.* The Duke of Würtemberg had not escaped the contagion of the building mania rife among the German princes of that period, and next day the Margravine inspected the great new palace, recently finished, and with a room in it for every day of the year. It was all on a finer and larger scale than she herself could afford to build, and she was especially pleased with the different kinds of marble used interiorly.

At Durlach, the old capital of the Margrave of Baden, the travellers put up at an inn; at Carlsruhe, where they were received as they wished, without

ceremony, they only stayed a couple of hours, and late in the evening of the 13th they reached Strasbourg, and Wilhelmina found herself, at last, on French soil.

As the King of France had ordered all the generals commanding and the governors of the provinces to render royal honours to the illustrious travellers, it was difficult to avoid the ceremonies that the Margravine "hated," and to stop the salutes of guns. Putting up at the Turkheim House, they had to endure state visits and dinners, and a badly acted comedy, *La coquette fixée*. Count Salm, the Bishop of Tournay, invited them to a poor concert, which "scraped her ears." He sang himself, and she accompanied him on the harpsichord. Another function was the baptism of the child of a local magnate, Count Glauvitz, at which the Margravine was present, standing sponsor. Then, after three days' stay, they left Strasbourg, and driving through the pleasant Alsatian land, reached Colmar, going rather out of their way, in order to pay a surprise visit to Voltaire. Wilhelmina was always loyal to her friends, and she pitied the poet even more than she blamed him. Though fully alive to Voltaire's weaknesses, she could not but think that Frederic had taken the financier and the pamphleteer too seriously. With womanly tact and sympathy, she took steps to pour oil on the troubled waters. She knew that Frederic would not be at all averse to hearing news at first hand about the genius he had always so much admired. She knew Voltaire, too, his consuming vanity, and guessed rightly that it was not so much the burning of *Dr. Akakia*, the loss of his insignia and offices, or even the Frankfürt maltreatment, that had wounded him as deeply as the forfeiture of the friendship of the great Frederic. She determined to do what she could for both parties. She even went so far as to beard and to flatter the "most objectionable" of nieces, Mde. Denis.

But let Voltaire tell his own story of rapture and

delight, a rapture which shows more than any of his lamentations how hardly Frederic's displeasure had hit him. It also shows Voltaire in one of his best aspects, his relations with the one woman to whom he was ever as true and loyal a friend as it was in his nature to be to anyone.

To the Duchess of Saxe-Gotha he wrote on the day after the Margravine's surprise visit:

"Who was surprised on the 23rd of this month? It was I, Madame, when one of Madame la Margrave de Baireuth's gentlemen came to tell me that his illustrious mistress was waiting supper for me at the '*Montagne Noire*,' a low public-house in the town. I rubbed my eyes: and thought it was a dream. I go to the '*Montagne Noire*,' I find there Monseigneur the Margrave and Her Royal Highness. There is no end to the kindnesses which they showered upon me; they want to carry me off to the banks of the Rhone, where they are going to spend the winter. I think they will stop some months at Avignon, in papal territory; that is all very fine for Calvinists. But for me, it is not to the Pope's palace, but to Ernest the Pious that I should like to go. Madame the Margravine of Baireuth insisted upon seeing my niece. 'Yes, Madame,' I said to her, 'she will be bold enough to present herself before you, though you are the sister of the King of Prussia.' Everything went off as well as possible; the sister did all that the brother should have done; she apologised as well as she could for the Frankfürt affair. In short, Madame, who knows better than your Serene Highness that your sex is made to repair the faults of ours? There are cruel gods, but there are goddesses who are more indulgent."

To the Duke of Richelieu he wrote a day or two later:

"Do you know, Monseigneur, that the sister of the King of Prussia, Madame la Margravine de Baireuth, wanted to take me to Languedoc and to papal territory? Imagine my astonishment when they came into my hermitage at Colmar to invite me from Madame de Baireuth to supper in a low public-house. Really, the interview was quite touching. It must have made a great impression on me, for I was at death's door next day."

To his friend the Comte d'Argental he wrote from his bed, five days after the stupendous event:

"Madame de Baireuth wanted to carry me off to Languedoc. Do you know that she is going there, that she has passed through

Colmar, that I supped with her on the 23rd, that she has given me a magnificent present, that she wished to see Madame Denis, and that she excused her brother's behaviour by blaming it? It all seemed to me a dream, and yet I stay at Colmar. . . I thank you for being pleased with *Semiramis*. Madame de Baireuth has made an Italian opera out of it, which has been played at Baireuth and Berlin."

To his friend Moncrif he repeats all this word for word, but adds a line which would have opened Wilhelmina's eyes to his protestations of friendship had she seen it.

"She wants to carry me off to Languedoc, where she is going to pass the winter for her health. But it is not on her account that I shall go, but for *M. le Maréchal de Richelieu*, to whom I have promised."

What a change! From their first introduction in the concert room at Rheinsberg, their next meeting at Berlin in the pomp and glare of *carousels* and operas, in the exquisite solitude of Sans Souci, to the "*Montagne Noire*" in a narrow street of Colmar! *Sic transit!* Yet to both the poet and his friend it must have been a delightful evening. Voltaire could not exist without adulation, and Wilhelmina gave it him. How they must have talked! There was so much to recall, and then, when all the grievances had been ventilated, and the sad story of Frankfürt reiterated, how brilliant and amusing must have been the conversation.

There was *Semiramis* to be criticised, and *L'Ouomo* to be described, the varied adventures of "*La Pucelle*" to be laughed over, and Voltaire's new historical labours to be discussed. Never could the best parlour of the "*Montagne Noire*" have heard such talk again!

The Mayor brought her some baskets of preserves and some wine of the country, and the Margravine probably made her first acquaintance with Burgundy. She went next day to see the thirteenth-century church of St. Benigne, the first "Christian church in Gothic,"

and the fourteenth-century cathedral of Nôtre Dame. But Gothic and mediæval did not appeal to Wilhelmina, and she describes them coldly.

In Châlons sur Seine she was interested, it being the ancient Cabillonum. Thence they took boat down the beautiful Soane, which delighted Wilhelmina, as did all rivers and water expeditions. It was night when they reached "Lion," and the houses on the quay, all lit up, made a charming effect.

The Margravine now took a much needed two days' rest, and spent her time having the silks and velvets for which Lyons is celebrated brought for her inspection. On the 2nd of November Cardinals Tençin, and Maréchal Belleisle, her Frankfürt acquaintance, came to pay their respects to her. Voltaire had written to his friend the Duke about the Margravine's wishes as to her reception.

"I do not think that any idea of ceremonial has entered the head of Madame la Margrave de Baireuth. She makes no difficulties as to confronting an Italian vice-legate; she will be much more pleased to see him who is the honour and does the honours of France; she is travelling *incognito*. The times are past when *punctilio* was a great business, and you are the best man in the world to put people at their ease. I do not think she deceived me when she told me that she feared a crowd of officials and the difficulty as to lodging her. She is not so sickly as I am, but her health is very frail, and requires unrestricted repose. She will find all that with you, besides pleasures which cannot be found elsewhere. It remains to be seen if she has the strength to make the little journey from Avignon to Montpellier, for they say she has fallen ill on the way. She has engaged lodgings at Avignon, but not at Montpellier."

The Duke, with the Cardinal and the Maréchal, were, however, received at the top of the stairs, and led into the Margravine's bedroom by the Margrave with due formality. She had only one room, besides the dining-room, but she received a great many distinguished people during the next few days, and was able to go and see the comedy of *Démocrite*. On the 4th she fell ill again. The Margrave took the opportunity,

being so near, of revisiting his old student haunts at Geneva, a quick cross-country ride being nothing to him. The day he left the Cardinal called again. The Marquis d'Essars, the distinguished general, came all the way from Paris to offer his house at Avignon. She paid a return visit to the Cardinal, at his palace, who received her at the top of the stairs, led her to the "*grand appartement*," seated her under the daïs, presented his sister and his niece, and himself put her into her sedan chair. On the 20th the Margrave returned, and they dined alone and went to the play to see *Mahomet II.* Next day the Margravine paid a visit to the Jesuits and saw their library and rare MSS. "You have been to the Jesuits," writes Frederic later, "certain sign that your health is better."

Especially pleased was Wilhelmina with the Museum of antiquities, both local and foreign, and probably now became first bitten with a taste for collecting, which she subsequently indulged in Italy. Visits from the Cardinal, dinners to the Jesuit fathers, visits to the Carmelites, visits to fourteen churches, by day, and to the play by night, filled up the time delightfully. The picture gallery of Fleurein (Flandrin ?) specially pleased her, and the antiquities at the Hôtel de Ville, and the aqueducts and the catacombs, her first sight of real Roman remains. The sixth-century church of St. Ernée, the oldest in Lyons, on the site of a Roman temple, rebuilt in 1100, especially interested her.

On the evening of the 16th there was another meeting with Voltaire, who had followed his adorable Margravine from Colmar, and with him she assisted at a very bad concert. Emboldened by her reception he made another attempt, under the excuse of wanting a passport which was unnecessary, to reopen a correspondence with the King. In reply came only a stiff letter *viâ* de Pradés. To his sister Frederic wrote sarcastically of her mediatorial attempts at Colmar:

"I am not surprised at the scene Voltaire treated you to: I recognise it by his introduction and by the part he played. His greatest trouble comes from a lawsuit he has had with the Duke of Würtemberg, to whom he lent 50,000 crowns. The Duke thought the agreement usurious; I think he is keeping back the interest, which puts the poet in the situation of d'Harpagnon shouting for his money-box."

How incensed Frederic was, a letter of his on the last day of the year to Earl Marshal Keith shows :

"More of Voltaire, my dear Milord. That madman is gone to Avignon, where my sister had sent for him. I am very much afraid that she will repent it."

Frederic, as will be seen, was misinformed.

From Lyons the poet wrote to D'Argental that he had "been welcomed and treated in the best possible manner by Madame the Margrave of Baireuth, who is still at Lyons." The public, too, received him and his plays with enthusiasm. But Cardinal Tencin, who had caused Bayle's Dictionary to be publicly burned, made the city so hot for him that Voltaire took himself off, after only a month's stay, to the shores of Leman, "sheltering," as the Margravine put it, "under the protection of the *Pucelle*."

Wilhelmina's prolonged visit to Lyons, and her intercourse with the ecclesiastics, gave rise to a rumour that she and her husband had turned Roman Catholic, a rumour which annoyed the King as much as it did her, and was indignantly denied by both. Frederic knew exactly what attracted her in the Jesuits :

"We have as many *savants* in Germany now as down there, but it is the refined and delicate taste that distinguishes the men of letters in France from those of our country. You will find in all the Jesuit monasteries agreeable and well-read people, and it must be confessed that every French Jesuit, taken individually, is an estimable man, but, in spite of this advantage, the Society, taken as a whole, is an abomination."

On November 19th the Margrave and Margravine resumed their journey. At Vienne, still dallying with ecclesiastics, they lodged with the Archbishop, and spent

a day sight-seeing. The Margravine describes the twelfth-century cathedral, and was especially struck by the "Grande Aiguille," probably part of a Roman circus, and known as Pilate's Tomb. The hollow interior of the base, pierced by a double arch, with unfinished Corinthian columns, must have reminded her of the Parnassus arch of the Ermitage. Then on, by the side of the Rhone, through a land full of remains of the Roman occupation, to St. Vallier, Valence, Montelimar. At the latter place the Archbishop of Narbonne came to offer his house at Montpellier in case they fancied spending the winter there. At Pont St. Esprit the Margravine was ill again, and could not see the Duc de Richelieu, who had followed to show them Nîmes. But, as usual, her mind conquered her frail body, and the next day they drove on to see the famous *Pont du Gard*. How enthusiastic the Margravine must have been at this her first sight of a complete Roman remains! How it must have whetted her appetite for Italy! She describes the huge aqueduct built by Agrippa B.C. 190 to carry water to Nîmes, 880 feet long, 160 feet high, and consisting of three tiers of arches. She must have driven over the bridge carried along the first tier of arches on the east side which had been made ten years previously. At Nîmes she felt the sharp contrast between real greatness and the corruptions of the *ancien régime*. She sees that only a Frederic could help France. But in his opinion only a rational decentralisation movement from the top of French society could save it.

The Bishop lodged them, and the Duc de Richelieu received them, and gave them a big dinner-party. Next day the Margravine went to see the Roman antiquities.

La Croze and Duhan had given their pupils, Frederic and Wilhelmina, the taste for classics. Wilhelmina was luckier than Frederic in that she was able to go to Italy. He wrote a little wistfully to her in Provence :—

"I do not doubt that you will pass your time very agreeably, and that you will be able to amuse yourself with the gossip of the living and the monuments of the dead. The profound veneration which one has for the Roman makes one look with respect at the remains and the ruins of their great works, of which you will find relics in Provence, which belonged to them for so long."

A little dinner of ladies, a small reception, and a great send-off concluded the stay at Nîmes. On November 27th they reached Avignon. *En route* the Margravine was so ill with fever that they had to stop, and she wrote a small, blotted, incoherent letter to Frederic describing figuratively that, as she could not continue her journey, she had herself carried to Berlin, and probably became delirious, for she waxed poetical, but has no ideas or *esprit* left, only her heart, which is devoted to her brother.

They were received by the Papal Vice-Legate, nephew of the Cardinal. The weather was terribly cold. She wrote to Frederic that she had made a winter compaign and was quite knocked up with it. The Rhone and the Durance were frozen over, wood was very scarce, and worth its weight in gold. The houses were all paved, and unwarmed, except by braziers, which made her head ache. Wilhelmina always felt the cold acutely, and she had not journeyed south to find such weather. Never had she been so uncomfortable; she had to sleep in her fur cloak, and, in spite of that, nearly died of cold. The Duke of Richelieu was prevented coming to call as the river was frozen over. "My hand is too numb to write."

Avignon, in those days, as the capital of the Comté of Venaissin, was still under the Popes, and twice the size that it is now. It was a centre of art, and a school of religious painters, examples of whose work the Margravine found in the churches must have interested her, in spite of the "Mistral." Avignon in mid-winter is not a pleasant residence when that piercing north-west wind blows. "*Avenio ventosa, cum vento fastidiosa,*

sine vento venenosa." "It must be confessed that you are unlucky in going to Provence a year when the cold all over Europe is excessive," wrote Frederic to console her. "I have just sent for a singer from Italy, who came from Venice hither in a sledge."

The Margravine was not only interested in antiquities. She noticed, and was much distressed, at the evils and corruption of the French Government, and the moral obliquity prevalent everywhere. The daughter of Frederic Wilhelm and the sister of Frederic, rulers who had shattered the old system in their dominions, and brought about reform and improvement, law and order, could not but be unpleasantly affected by the state of France under Louis XV.

She saw people also who interested her. After several days' rest she held receptions, and daily gave large dinners. Among others who paid their respects was Lord Dunbar—the Old Pretender's late minister at Rome—and relics of the Young Pretender's stay in France some years before, in the persons of his late tutor Stafford, and of two of his Scotch guards, whose odd dress Lord Dunbar told her was that of the ancient Romans. These Highlanders surprised her very much; she wrote that they were people of iron frames who lived on flour mixed with water and were not affected by the horrid *mistral*, which they probably enjoyed, poor mountaineers, exiled to these soft southern climes. She wrote that they bathed daily in the Rhone, and preferred it when frozen.

The Margravine was interested in the young Chevalier, as, a few years before he was expelled from France he had endeavoured to make an alliance with Frederic, and had offered for the hand of one of his younger sisters or nieces. Frederic had not been successful in the Würtemberg marriage, but the Young Chevalier would have been even a worse match! The latter's movements at the moment were very mysterious. Lord Dunbar himself told the Margravine that he did not know where

he was ; she wrote to Frederic that many people believed him to be in England, and, indeed, it is authentic that he had been there the year before.

Another interesting acquaintance Wilhelmina made at Avignon was an engineer, M. de Robert, now in the French army, and a wreck, full of wounds, who had been with Charles XII. in his last campaigns, and was present at his death. The account he gave of it to her was different to what she had heard before. He offered to make her a plan of the battle. She wrote that she would send it to Frederic, and also the plans and writing of the Chevalier de Folard, Robert's uncle, but that the Maréchal de Belleisle had been bequeathed them all. Frederic would thus see how she was always thinking of him. Indeed, constantly we find her on this journey, collecting not only curiosities and antiquities to send to Berlin to the King, who had the best she could pick up, and the new Baireuth Academy of Art the next best, but also political and military information and news of all kinds.

Socially, she had her worries at Avignon. She was received, indeed, splendidly, but the ladies were shallow, and only thought about her clothes, and not about herself—so provincial. Moreover, Frederic, whose loving heart had grown acute in detecting any matrimonial troubles on his dearest sister's part, since he had discovered the great Marwitz grief, so long hidden from him, perceived from her letters that she had now again cause for jealousy.

Frederic advised patience and philosophy, and wrote her a fable of a person called Sentiment, who fell in love with a butterfly. He bade her recollect that Italy was the land of lovely women, and tried to smooth her matrimonial path.

"You are, my dear sister, in a country where the conquest of women is not difficult, and where, probably, out of preference for foreigners, they make the advances. One cannot change the nature of things, or the temperament with which one is born. But, if I

am not asking the impossible, cast away your jealousy, and rejoice when your dear butterfly returns to you, and accustom yourself to seeing him often fly away."

Hard advice for a nature as loyal as Wilhelmina's to follow. Bitter was it to find herself neglected for some French coquette who better understood the art of putting on her clothes!

She fell quite ill again towards the end of the month, yet the Margrave left her two days later on a flying visit to Baireuth. He took horse with a few of his suite, and, at his usual break-neck speed, made very short work of the ride across Europe, and was back again in just over a month! Letters from Frederic cheered the sick Margravine during her husband's absence. He wrote that things were satisfactory at Stuttgart at present, and that the young Duchess had no troubles. Indeed, Wilhelmina seems to have been able to leave the young couple with an easy mind, for a month later, through the Duke's brother, Frederic heard that "the Duke lived fairly well with his wife, at least he maintains respectable appearances, which is all you can ask of a husband-prince."

The Margravine's health improved and her headaches grew less, as she wrote in her letter congratulating Frederic on his *première* of "Montezuma," and commenting on the difference between the opera at Berlin and that of Dresden:

"In the latter place you only see dull, bored faces, and in the other everyone goes for the pleasure of seeing their Prince and benefactor.

"I send you a copy (unfortunately lost) of a letter from M. Camille Padoni, apothecary of the King of Naples, written to one of my gentlemen. You will see, my dear brother, an account of the library at Herculaneum, and of the other antiquities found during the last year."

During her husband's absence the Margravine made an expedition to the little Principality of Orange, which had once belonged to her ancestors, and had been

exchanged with France for Gelders, by her grandfather, and saw the triumphal arch of Marius, "very fine," and the ruined amphitheatre. On February 24th the Margrave returned, and the journey to Italy was decided on. The floods in the Rhone Valley interfered somewhat with excursions, but the Margravine saw L'Isle, "famous for the sojourn of Petrarch and Laura," and the Fountain of Vaucluse "*chiare, fresche, e dolce acque.*" Then back to Avignon, seeing the churches, the tombs of the Popes and Laura; "The Avignonais are very clever at arches, and I saw some stairs in the air which are *chef d'œuvres* of cut stone," writes the architecturally-inclined Margravine.

The long stay in the Papal territory had again given rise to the rumour that Wilhelmina and the Margrave had "gone over to Rome." The King wrote that the "rumour is all over Germany." But he contradicted it in diplomatic circles and in the Diet, and begged his sister to do some *momerie calviniste*, and

"especially if you go to Marseilles, where there is a merchant who has a Protestant church of his own, or if you pass through some Protestant town, that the libellers may be silenced."

He goes on to thank her for a rare table she has sent him, "more precious as coming from you than for its rarity," and to describe how they had celebrated that day with great pomp, Pöllnitz's birthday, who is sixty-five; "the old Baron dressed himself up like a young peacock, and to-night he will see his name illuminated."

On April 1st the travellers left Avignon. The nobility took leave of them at the boat. They went up the Durance to Orgon, a little old walled town with a castle on the hill above, where they dined, and then drove on to Aix, which they reached late at night, and supped with Duke de Villars and a small select party under the *incognito* of Comte and Comtesse La Marche. But it had been a long and rough journey, and the Margravine was

so tired that she did not enjoy the supper as she should have done, for no one but Parisians were present. The next day on to Marseilles, which they reached at 10 o'clock. Though they were *incognito* Barry gave them a fine reception, almost royal, and the Margravine was very pleased. He had received orders to send them on to Toulon and Antibes with every possible help. The Margravine thought that Marseilles was the most beautiful city she had hitherto seen in France, "a little image of Paris." The different nationalities, Eastern and Western, to be seen in the streets, interested and amused her, but she was particularly struck by the harbour. It was Wilhelmina's first glimpse of the sea! One can imagine her enthusiasm. The Rhine, the Rhone, had filled her with delight, but now the Mediterranean! In order to get their sea legs for the further journey they went for a two hours' sail, and the Margravine specially mentions in her diary that she did not feel ill. Two days they spent shopping, and unable to tear themselves away from the harbour, and in the evenings there was, of course, the play, but the company was not so good as at Lyons.

At Toulon, which they reached on the 6th, entirely new horizons and fresh interests opened out to the travellers from the heart of Germany. The superintendent of the Dockyard took them round the harbour in a felucca, and Wilhelmina, for the first time, went over a battleship. It was the *Foudroyant*, the Admiral's flagship. This *Foudroyant*, eighty-four guns, had a famous career. The year after the Margravine saw her she fought Byng off Minorca. In 1758, still the flagship, she was captured by the English in the Mediterranean, and taken over into the British Fleet. Twenty years after she was fighting under Captain John Jervis, afterwards Lord St. Vincent, at the battle off Ushant, and in 1782, under the same commander, captured the French *Pégase* in the Bay of Biscay, and finally gave her name to the ship of Nelson's fleet at

Trafalgar, which was wrecked off the Lancashire coast, more than two centuries later.

Returning to land, the Margrave and Margravine visited the workshops, and saw ships being built, went over the Marine Academy, where the cadets were paraded, and then they drove to spend the night at the very pretty country seat of the Marquis de Luc.

Next on to Frèjus. The Margravine was now once more back in classic times, and delighted by exploring the Roman amphitheatre, fountain, bridge, and walls. Next day they dined at Cannes. Wishful to repeat her Marseilles experience, the Margravine took boat, and rowed across to the Isles Lérins, and inspected the Prison of the Man in the Iron Mask, whose story was then comparatively recent. In the evening they reached Antibes, and were put up by the Marquis de Sade. The following day, as was so often the case, the Margravine collapsed, and had to spend it in bed.

In those days there was no Corniche Road between Nice and Genoa. The famous highway, the most beautiful in the world, has given place in our time to the rail. The traveller, whisked in and out of tunnels, loses most of the beauty of the journey. Motor cars will be the means of restoring it to him. But the Margravine saw the lovely coast in the only way she could, and it may be doubted if she did not see it to more advantage than had she gone by land. For Wilhelmina became now quite a yachtswoman. At Antibes the party embarked in feluccas, and sometimes sailing, sometimes rowing, reached Monaco, and landed in the picturesque harbour of the little principality. No arrangements having been made about putting up, they begged to be allowed to lodge at the palace. Comte Grimaldi, a natural son of the late Prince, received them on the quay and conducted them to the fine Renaissance pile, which was quite after the Margravine's own heart. Here was indeed a "palace that is charming . . . the situation magnificent." Not one of the royal residences

she knew had stood like this. "The sea beats its walls, many terraces covered with gardens make it infinitely pleasant." . . . "It was there for the first time we saw palm-trees and oranges in the open air."

The next day there was so little wind that the little flotilla of feluccas started very early in the morning. But the Mediterranean kept up its usual treacherous character, and a storm came on. Reaching Bordighera with difficulty, they slept in the little old town, high on the promontory, in a lodging they found, the Genoese commandant's palace being too dirty and smelly to think of. The next day the sea was still so rough that, in spite of all the efforts of the rowers, they only got as far as San Remo, glad to take refuge in the little harbour. From thence the Margravine writes to her brother that, in spite of all her fatigues, she thinks more of him than of herself, that she has seen at Toulon several battle-ships; that she will send him later a description of the Prison of the Iron Mask, and that, in spite of the wind and terrible storm, she, like so many semi-invalids, feels better at sea than on land.

After a day's detention at San Remo by weather, they reached Finale and Genoa, "the happy country where huge lemons grow," as Gray had quoted from Waller, when he and Walpole were there sixteen years before.

The Margravine wrote to her brother that she had arrived so knocked up that, though she had already seen something of the beautiful city, she must make her letter brief. Lodgings have been prepared at the house of Count Duratzo, in the Via Balbi, near the Palazzo Reale, with a fine colonnaded courtyard, one of the lofty, gloomy houses in the labyrinth of lanes which climb the hill by means of steps, and are crossed by arches for fear of earthquakes. The Baireuth Court being *incognito* all honours were refused, so there were no ceremonies to go through, and the Margravine

went to bed. The next day she received the nobility, and drove with Madame Grimaldi round the town, seeing the Doria gardens on the shore, which, however, only impressed her by the views of the city from them; next day, churches, pictures, relics, and more gardens. The interior of the churches struck her, "but it will be nothing to Rome," she writes enthusiastically to Frederic. We can imagine the Margravine taking hints on this her first acquaintance with the Italian gardens of the eighteenth century. Later on, Frederic, probably at her instigation, sent for an Italian gardener, for "German gardeners cannot create."

There was an assembly at the Grimaldis, and an opera, which the Margravine thought poor. Genoese society, which did not appeal to her. Only the Countess Grimaldi spoke French, the other ladies nothing but their own language. Frederic wrote to her chaffingly:

"I hope, my dear sister, that, according to the custom of the country where you are, you will be careful to provide yourself with a *cicisbeo*."

He implored her on no account to go in a felucca from Rome to Naples on account of the "Barbary pirates who infest that coast, and who could, if not capture you, at least insult you." Indeed, even while they were at Genoa, there came news of an Algerian corsair cruising off Lerici, and they were glad to accept the offer of a galley as an escort when they sailed.

Stopping one night at Sestri, at Madame Spinola's, they left the sea at Lerici. Thus ended a delightful trip, that we moderns might envy.

Driving over horrible roads, and hauled up a steep mountain, they reached to Massa Carera, the capital of the Duchy of that name among the marble hills. The next day on to Pisa, where the house of Countess Cavoli had been prepared for them, and, after a recep-

tion of Austrian-Italian magnates, for Tuscany was then Austrian by virtue of its Grand Duke's marriage with Maria Theresa, to bed. The next two days, sight-seeing—the Cathedral, "*une église immense*," the Baptistery, the Leaning Tower, the Campo Santo, the churches, the baths, old and new, are all set forth in the Margravine's diary. Then a night journey to Florence, and two days in bed, ill.

The Margravine now did sight-seeing to the top of her bent, and far beyond her strength. She enumerates churches, palaces, pictures, sculptures, and antiquities, and made still more exhaustive lists of all that she saw, which are lost. But we must remember she travelled in an age which was unenlightened with guide-books. Two days afterwards she took up her pen to talk to Frederic:

"To write to you is the occupation I like best, and prefer to any other."

She regrets not to have found time since leaving Genoa to converse with the dear brother to whom she owes so many thanks. During the voyage from Genoa to the opposite shore there was a dreadful storm. At Pisa she has seen the cathedral, the Leaning Tower, which is really something to be afraid of, the baths of Nero. At Florence she has only just begun to see the artistic treasures. She admires them very much, but the heat and the fatigue of the journey have quite exhausted her strength. This elicited a warning reply. He saw in her letter many beautiful churches, fine tombs and antiquities, but he must confess that he did not find the only thing he looked for, the re-establishment of her health. He believes moderate exercise is, perhaps, very good for her, but he fears the fatigues of such a long journey may be too unnerving.

Frederic was right. Mid-Italy in May! and for a delicate woman so sensitive to extremes of heat and cold as was Wilhelmina!

The Austrian Regent at Florence was the Comte de Richelieu, the friend of Lady Walpole. Immediately on the arrival of the Margrave and Margravine he hastened with his son-in-law, De la Tour, to pay his respects.

Sir Horace Mann, Horace Walpole's uncle, had been the British Envoy at Florence for some years, and he sent home an account of the doings and sayings of his master's niece.

"They seemed determined to be *incognito*, yet their Highnesses afterwards accepted of a Dinner at Count Richecœur's, at which I had the honour to be invited. After dinner there was a concert of Musick, during which Her Royal Highness took occasion to speak to me of the report which had been spread at Genoa and in those parts that she and the Margrave were going to Rome to change their Religion, which report she turned into Ridicule."

That hare was evidently hard to kill!

Florentine society apparently pleased the Margravine more than it did young Horace when he visited his uncle. For she broke into her round of sight-seeing and curio-hunting, and "appointed an afternoon to receive the ladies to whom intimation was made by the Regent to go thither." They spent, too, one of the lovely Italian evenings with the Count in his beautiful country house, the Grand Duke's *Maison de Plaisance*, *L'Imperiali*, where the Margravine admired the sculpture. But the crowning entertainment, given in the honour of the learned and artistic Margravine, was "an *Academie de Belles Lettres*, that is, an assembly of learned people." From the *Imperiali* they drove back in the Regent's own coaches "to the *Imperialino*, where all the nobility were assembled, and M. de Richecœur gave me *le Jeu de la Sibile*."

"She proposed all the question to the *Sibilla*, who is represented by a child," writes Sir Horace to his nephew.

"Buondelmonte and Lami were the interpreters. The first question was: which was the greatest man, Aristotle or Alexander?

The answer to this was 'Stella.' Great pains were taken to make a comparison between them, but unluckily Buondelmonte seemed to forget that Aristotle had been mentioned, and as it was more convenient to chuse somebody of the same trade, he adopted Charles XIIth and then Cromwell, to compare with Alexander; and, after having wandered extremely, he could not avoid to talk a great deal of nonsense, to prove that 'Stella' was a very clear and proper answer to the question proposed; that Alexander was a star of the first luster, of which he gave a definition, and thereby shewed that he was as bad an astronomer as he was an historian. Lami came off better in both respects. The second question was: why the ancient Tuscans were more given to the Science of Divination than the other people of Italy? To which the Sibil, with her usual clearness, answered 'Trota'—upon which infinite nonsense was talked; as well as upon the third question: whether matter was divisible *à l'inifini*. The answer was 'Tamburo,' upon which Buondelmonte began by observing that the Sibil already denoted that it was a question that had made a great noise in the world!

"This ridiculous amusement lasted many hours. Many Ladies were invited, and as they neither understood a word of what was said, nor could have their Cicisbeos by them to talk of something else, they were almost asleep. The Margravine honoured me with some observations, as I happened to be the only man near her, and though she was inclined to approve, she allowed me to say that it was a torturing of common sense to adapt the Sibil's answers to the questions, and that they were often above the *portée* of the interpreters to talk extempore upon . . . and that, upon the whole, this sort of amusement was a proof of the decay of knowledge in the country; but Count Richecœur came up, and by his great encomiums upon the learning which the Interpreters had shown, as well as of the great use of such an Institution, to form the judgments of young as well as of old people, by torturing their brains to prove that the Art of Divination in Ancient Etrusca was like a 'Trout,' stopped our mouths, and I make no doubt that any great Lady of *Spirito*, who comes here for the future, will insist upon having an *Academia* and *Il Gioco della Sibilla* made for her."

In a letter to Frederic, begun at Florence and finished at Rome, Wilhelmina describes this entertainment, at which a boy of ten or twelve years old was dressed up as a Sybil, and of whom she asked three questions. One of the Augur's replies delighted her. It was nothing less than a carefully prepared panegyric on the King of Prussia under the name of Alexander, and she hastens to give him the gist of it. Wilhelmina,

with her French rococo taste, was evidently pleased with the game of augury, this classical adaptation, which bored the frivolous Italians as it did the more matter-of-fact Englishman. To Frederic she wrote of the antiquities and the pictures she had seen, some of those in the churches shocking her by their coarseness. It is interesting to note from these letters the different points of view from which the brother and sister look on Italy. Frederic saw only the severely classic aspect. Modern Italy is to him an old coquette living on the remains of her former beauty. He treats Wilhelmina to a sermon upon the fall of the Italian nation. Florence does not convince him. Wilhelmina, like all distinguished guests, had been received with poetry. Two printed sonnets welcoming them, "*Applausa per la venuta in Firenze*," are to be found stuck in one of the Margravine's books, a collection of Italian poetry printed at Florence in 1753. But the *improvisatores*, the carnival songs of Lorenzo di Medici, the then little-known Tuscan lyrics, and the *cinquecento* atmosphere of Florence, fail to strike any sympathetic chord in Frederic's soul. He only makes a cynical rejoinder as to the lapse of centuries required before German peasants do the like. The acquaintance of Algarotti, of the Barbarina, of Porporino, had not improved his opinion of modern Italy.

Mann describes a rather stiff and dull dinner given by the Comte de Richecœur to the Margrave and Margravine, to which he was invited. It gives us a glimpse of the Margravine's feelings towards England. She put out a diplomatic feeler. The alliance threatening Frederic was gathering in strength, and England's attitude was very important to him. Sir Horace was in personal touch with the Government at home through Walpole, and Wilhelmina felt that she might possibly be doing Frederic a good turn in, at least, sounding England on his behalf. But Sir Horace was more than a match for her.

"Great state was observed, and the conversation was very languid, to enliven which, I suppose, the Margrave asked the Master of the Table, which he had rather have been, St. Francis or Caesar? He did not decide. There was a concert of Musick after dinner, which all the men would have willingly dispensed with, as we were forced to stand the whole time, for want of an order from Her Royal Highness to sit down. She was pleased to distinguish me, by talking to me the whole time; for, as she is a great Composer of Musick, as well as of Operas, Tragedies, etc., the performers did not please her at all; even the Margrave, she said, played much better; so she did not attend, but talked to me of her Brother, shewed me his picture, and took occasion to say that it was very unfortunate that the King of England, her Unckle, had not that goodness for his family that might be expected, and that her brother very seriously lamented the misunderstanding that was between them. I retorted her accusation, laid the whole blame upon the King of Prussia, who, I said, had not even that regard for his Unckle which that equality (*sic*) might exact, besides the decency observed between two princes; and that to make the breach the wider, he had espoused an Interest totally opposite to that which our King espoused. . . My discourse led me to the brink of disrespect, which I, however, avoided, and she was not at all offended. A Lady who was near overheard a part of our discourse, and some of my answers have been since quoted about the town. She took occasion to turn into ridicule the report that was spread of both her and the Margrave's design of changing their religion at Rome. I said that those who had the honour to approach her could never give credit to it."

On May 7th the travellers left Florence, "well satisfied," reports Mann, "with the marks of respect that had been shown them." They went by Boggiobonsi, where the Margravine was taken ill and had to pass a day in bed. Then on to Sienna, the marble work of the church "so fine that, though it is Gothic, it never ceases to impress one" (!) At San Virico they stayed at the house of the Marquise Viggi, where another attack again detained the Margravine. Then on by Radicofoni, sleeping at an "abominable inn," by Viterbo and Bolenzo, very ill again, and at last, on the 14th, they reached Rome.

CHAPTER VI

REALISATION

The Margravine arrives in Rome.—A distinguished traveller.—Royal honours.—A whirl of sight-seeing.—Curio-hunting for Frederic.—A peep at the Pope.—Down the Appian Way.—Arrival in Naples.—The King and his capital do not please the Margravine.—A day with Virgil, and an evening with Condamine.—La Croze's pupil on classic ground.—The Margravine goes underground.—Back to Rome.—Among the villas and the seven hills.—Hard work.—St. Peter's day functions.—To northern Italy.—A feast of Italian music.—Fever.—Venice.—A visit to Algarotti.—Home.

Not many years before Horace Walpole had written of the Eternal City:

"I am very glad to see it while it still exists. I am persuaded that in a hundred years Rome will not be worth seeing, 'tis less so now than one would believe. All the public pictures are decayed or decaying, the few ruins cannot last long, and the statues and private collections must be sold from the great poverty of the families."

To our pampered generation, for whom Rome has been excavated, tended, and preserved, these lines convey some idea of the city as Wilhelmina saw it. We have her first letter from Rome to Frederic, written two days after her arrival, so pale and yellow with age as to be very illegible. It opens with complaints of having had no news from the King for five weeks, and weeks do not seem to her weeks, but years. For the feelings of the heart are ever the most prevailing with her, and a line from the hand of her dear brother is more precious to her than all the artistic treasures which she sees here daily. Illness has prevented her continuing this letter

begun at Florence; she finishes it at Rome in a few words, because the post is going out immediately and strength obliges her to break off this chat.

The Margrave and Margravine lodged in an apartment prepared for them by the Chevalier Colbroline. Socially and politically, Rome was lively and interesting at that moment. The Old Pretender was at his villa at Albani, Richecœur had moved to Rome and had just given a ball at his country house in honour of the Empress's birthday, and the Pope was about to make a distribution of several Cardinals' hats. The Margravine was not well enough to receive the French Ambassador and Cardinals Melini and Albani, who came at once to pay their respects, but had a private dinner to which was invited a distinguished guest, whom she had been longing to see. This was the great French traveller, mathematician, and scientist, La Condamine. He had recently returned from his South American scientific expedition, and was staying in Italy before proceeding to England. In him Wilhelmina made a new acquaintance quite to her taste—many-sided, intellectual, scientific, besides being remarkable for his gaiety and kind-heartedness. After dinner they lost not a moment in going *incognito* to see St. Peter's, "alone worth going to Rome for," and on to a mosaic manufactory, and then took a cursory view of the outside of many of the principal buildings.

The Pope hastened to receive officially the illustrious Protestant travellers with Royal honours:

"Immediately on their arrival," reports Mann, "Cardinal Valenti (the Secretary of State) sent one of his gentlemen to compliment their Highnesses on his part, and on the 15th they were presented by Cardinal Mellini, according to the custom of this country, with divers sorts of eatables, which were carried to them by twelve servants."

The Margravine, in her diary, does not fail to note that it was the present usually given to sovereigns arriving at Rome:

"boxes of preserves and essences, flowers, chocolate, cheese, fruits, a calf, and two guinea-fowls."

In the evening the Margravine held a reception of prelates and foreign ambassadors. Among the former was Cardinal Albani, with whom, doubtless, Wilhelmina talked landscape gardening! The next day was devoted to an exhaustive inspection of the treasures of the Capitol. In spite of being bled the morning following, this frail but indefatigable creature went to the Vatican in the afternoon to see an ecclesiastical ceremony, a model ship blessed by the Pope and thrown into the river; and on to the Farnese Palace, the church of St. Jerome, and a drive up and down the Corso. Why, oh why, these superhuman exertions during the heat of May in Rome? The next few days her diary shows to have been spent in a whirl of sight-seeing—palaces, villas, churches, pictures, statues—and in receiving and dining distinguished men, Italian and foreign. But her letter to Frederic tells of sorrow on the 20th. Bad news from Baireuth found her ill, and spending the day in bed. Folichon was dead. Dear Folichon! and his mistress so far away from the faithful companion of so many years! Directly Wilhelmina hears that her beloved doggie will no more welcome her on her return, she takes up her pen to pour out her grief into the sympathetic heart which, in the worry of the war, found time to chronicle and to regret the loss of Biche.

On May 23rd the Margrave went on ahead to Naples, and Wilhelmina cheered herself by finishing the letter to Frederic, begun a few days before. She is very unhappy at hearing of the King's illness, and would willingly bear the pains of the gout instead of her dear brother. She is always busy with Ancient Rome and its modern denizens. It is possible she will go to see the Pope; and the Cardinals and Ambassadors have already paid her visits. "Antiquities and pictures can be bought here for a crust of bread. Music is now entirely destroyed, but painting still holds on." She

had been to see the work of her compatriot, "the Saxon artist 'Mink,' who does Germany credit, and at the age of twenty-seven really equals the Titians and Guidos." By him she means Raphael Mengs. It is strange that, though art was such an element in Wilhelmina's life, she had so little personal relation to artists of any kind. She writes constantly about art, but barely mentions them except by their bare names. At Rome she visited a sculptor's studio, but could not remember his name; this Saxon artist's she spells wrong. There was a certain *grande dame* aloofness in Wilhelmina, very different to Frederic's attitude to his inferiors.

Frederic had written letters mocking at Italy, calling her "an old coquette who thinks herself as beautiful as she was in her youth, and who only shows by her remains what she once was," and sneering at the papal rulers. Yet the old Teutonic yearning for the south breaks out. If he could but have been upset on the Appian Way, referring to her coach accident. Wilhelmina sent him two fragments of granite columns, but it was difficult to get them sent to Germany on account of the Barbary pirates in the Adriatic. Constantly she wrote offering to send pictures and antiquities. Of the former Frederic fought shy: "The Italians were so clever at drawing, and had infected England with so many *postiches.*" As to marbles, he fancied antique Jade, *jal* he calls it. Before she left Rome Wilhelmina sent him some old green granite from Egypt, a specimen of which was lacking in his collection, and begs it may be taken great care of. "It is very fine, but it must be worked up."

The Margravine followed her husband in her coach the same day, in the evening. But before starting she had a peep at the Pope, by hiding in the sacristy of S. Maria Maggiore. The procession began with the Master of the Committee posting the Swiss Guard in the vestibule. There followed six footmen in black, with flowing wigs and cloaks, then twelve prelates in purple,

and six little choir boys. After the cross-bearer came the Pope, leaning upon two ecclesiastics, and two others bore his train. A detachment of the Guard finished the procession. "I was assured, nevertheless, that he was *incognito* when he went out in this way!"

It took the Margravine three days to drive to Naples, travelling all one night. On the Appian Way she was upset and nearly broke a rib. "At Marino she was complimented," reports Mann, "by Comte Laguasco and entertained with a handsome refreshment in a convent of monks." Arriving at Naples, on the morning of the 26th, *viâ* Velletri and Capua, over horrible roads, she at once threw herself into sight-seeing and receiving ambassadors, with the result that when she went to the opera in the evening she fainted. Though nothing could be finer than the *coup d'œil* of the city, the harbour and Vesuvius, "the streets are very badly built and there is not the least architecture to be seen, and the populace shout night and day." (Poor tired Margravine during the hot night!)

The King was staying at Portici, but came to town for a grand religious procession and a dinner at the Palace. But the Margravine was to ill to see the show. To both her annoyance and that of Frederic, the King of Naples neither received them, nor showed them any civilities, either as sovereigns or as *incognito*. They were not invited to the *gran gala* or to the *Besamanoz* at Court on the next day, the King's name day. But, as Frederic wrote, the *incognito* was so very transparent and ambiguous that Wilhelmina risked falling between two stools. "The King," she wrote to her brother, "thinks of nothing but hunting and fishing, while the Queen does all the business. The Queen wished to see the Margrave, but the reception did not take place, on account of ceremonial difficulties."

To the Margravine, probably, the society of La Condamine amply made up for the loss of that of the uncongenial King and Queen. He had followed her to

Naples. "How lucky I think you are to have La Condamine with you," wrote Frederic. "I believe that, with the exception of some *savants* at Florence, the species is rare in Italy, as everywhere else."

The Royal Palace, with the stuffed elephant, did not appeal to the Margravine, the apartments of the King and Queen being "neither remarkable nor magnificent." Her Royal Highness was evidently out of taste with the Neapolitan Royalties! The delightful expedition to Posilipo, under the guidance of the charming *savant* pleased her far more. They saw the Roman Columbarium in the vineyards on the hill, and Virgil's tomb. The historical evidence for the poet being buried there is very slight. But he had a villa at Pausilypon, and expressed a wish to lie there. Petrarch is said to have visited the tomb and planted a laurel, and in Wilhelmina's day the laurel was still growing. But it has long been cut away by souvenir-hunting tourists, and has been recently replaced by another. The Margravine descended into the little vaulted chamber, with recesses for cinerary urns, and picked a laurel wreath to send to her brother.

Returning to Naples, she rested in the middle of the day, dining in bed, as was now her most sensible habit, and in the evening there was music. Next morning a visit to the Capo di Monte china factory delighted the Margravine, as a china collector, and in the evening several of the nobility and foreign ministers came, and La Condamine. A delightful evening Wilhelmina must have spent. Here was a pleasant change from the ecclesiastical society which had been her only intellectual fare for some months past. The great *savant* unbent. It was probably on this evening that he wrote the *brouillon* of the little "conceit" to be sent to Frederic with the laurel leaf, the verses which appeared anonymously in the *Mercure de France* in January, 1756, and were reprinted in the same journal in September as by Voltaire. But La Condamine claimed them by a letter inscribed the next month.

"Vers qui accompagnent une branche de laurier cueillie (le 30 Mai, 1755) sur le tombeau de Virgile."

"Au tombeau de Virgile un immortel laurier
De l'outrage des temps seul a su se défendre,
Toujours vert et toujours entier.
Je voulais le cueillir, et n'osais l'entreprendre;
Prevenant mon effort, je l'ai vu se plier,
Et cette voix s'est fait entendre :
'Approche, auguste sœur du rival d'Alexandre :
Frédéric de mon lyre est le digne héritier.'"

Early in the morning of June 1st, they started for another beautiful drive, through the Posilipo tunnel, to the Grotto del Cane, where the feelings of the mistress of the late lamented Folichon were hurt by the experimenting with the sulphurous vapours of the cave on a dog. She thought it astonishing that the latter should have survived these constant suffocations for two years. Then on to the Temple of Serapis, only just excavated. After dining at Pozzuoli, in spite of the great heat, they took a felucca across the lovely bay to Baiæ. Here Wilhelmina was on classic ground. Every yard spoke to her of the past she loved—and she describes the vineyards which grew Falernian wine; the lake which yielded oysters for its Lucullian feasts; the Dead Sea beneath which lie Caesar's galleys; the reservoir which watered his sailors; the Elysian Fields with their ruined tombs and broken urns; Nero's subterranean prisons, so-called, which she doubted; the house where his mother was murdered, and her tomb; the baths of Cicero; the Temple of Diana, and Venus's baths; of the latter she made a plan. Much of all this was done afoot, in the great afternoon heat! Then, by a mistake of the sailors, they were put ashore too far from Pozzuoli, and were obliged to trudge into the town. What wonder that the poor Margravine had to go to bed on her return to Naples, and so missed the fireworks in honour of Corpus Christi Day! But what joy to be able to write to Frederic that she "had been to Baiæ,

had admired the reservoir of Lucullus, which still exists entirely, as well as a portion of Nero's palace. The temples of the ancients are one like another ; when one has seen the Pantheon one has seen them all," and she regrets that sufficient care is not taken of the remains, and that, instead of excavating, they are despoiled. At Baiæ a new town has been found well preserved.

The next day, nothing daunted, another long round, by cabriolet along the Via Campagna, strewn with tombs and urns. The intrepid Margravine descended into vaulted sepulchres, and carried off pieces of mural paintings. She mounted a ladder and climbed into a Roman tomb, only excavated two days before, fingered the gold tissue which swathed the bodies, and the lamp and silver dish placed by their side. She studied the design and colourings of the well-preserved frescoes, and came to the conclusion, since authenticated, that there was intercourse between Rome and China, which accounted for the quantity of paintings in Chinese style found in Rome and Herculaneum. What a feast day for the mind ! Never had La Croze's pupil been so literally in touch with her beloved ancients ! Then on to Cumæ, the remains of the old Greek colony in Italy. Under a triumphal arch, past the tomb of Scipio Africanus, the lake of Licolo—Virgil's Acheron—and the Giant's Temple, to the Sybil's cave on Lake Avernus. Into this, by means of a low, narrow passage, she groped and crept. But the vaults were flooded, and the Margravine, nothing daunted, had herself carried by a peasant through the water in the dark to where a streak of light from an aperture overhead showed the little round room where the oracles were delivered. Back by the same way, and then on foot round Lake Avernus to see the Temple of Apollo, and to the scanty ruins of the palaces of Nero and Caesar. A good day's work ? The Margravine made plans of some of the most interesting remains of these parts, but they are unfortunately lost.

After a sorely needed rest day, and a second day

devoted to music at home, opera, and visitors, the expedition to Herculaneum took place, in the company, doubtless, of La Condamine, who, knowing the country so well, seems to have acted as "guide, philosoper, and friend." They drove to Portici, where the King was. The Margravine did not think much of the beauty of his palace, as she drove through the courtyard and stepped down into "a sort of mine." For the visit to Herculaneum she quite prepared, having, as we have seen, received, when at Avignon, from the King's apothecary, a catalogue of the antiquities discovered during the past year, and which she had sent on to Frederic. But the excavations at Herculaneum, at the time of the Margravine's visit, were comparatively recent. The year before the whole amphitheatre had been cleared; but the work was carried on in a vandal style, and the excavations were rifled of their treasures to sell to royalty; Pompeii was still almost entirely underground. Bending half double, the Margravine groped along a passage to where workmen were uncovering a column, and two fine slabs of mosaic pavement, seemingly the centre of a hall or of a temple. She wandered about without discovering anything "that excited my curiosity or enlightened me, and came out as I went in." The amphitheatre "was smaller than that of Verona." Altogether the Margravine, who had been so enthusiastic in Rome, was far less so in Roman Herculaneum. Perhaps the heat and the fatigue had something to say to it.

On the morning of June 5th the Margrave and Margravine left Naples very early, and turned their faces again towards Rome. Part of Wilhelmina's spoils included a sketch of her own of Vesuvius, and an antique from Nero's tomb which she placed in the Ermitage. They passed Caserta, saw its palaces, old and new; by Capua, Idri, and Mola, with the house of Cicero. At Gaeta they saw in a niche in the wall the body of the Constable of Bourbon, standing dressed in the costume

of his period grasping a halberd. Following in the track of Horace and of St. Paul, under the Volscian hills, through the dreaded Pontine Marshes, on the evening of the third day they reached Rome again.

After an afternoon devoted to visitors, they went in the evening to the beautiful gardens of the Villa Ludovici, where the fountain and cascades especially appealed to the Margravine. Next day they paid another visit to the studio of the artist Mengs, "the German Raphael," saw the Medici Palace, churches, the Vatican. A whole day was devoted to the Palatine, of which she gives a long account; yet how comparatively little there was then to see!

Thus, day after day, the Capitoline, the Quirinal, the lovely villas, the famous palaces, with all their treasures of art and of antiquity, were exhaustively explored; no American tourist could have toiled harder; and the Margravine had no Baedeker, and had to work it all out for herself! Only after ten days' labour do we hear of a morning's rest.

"On the 24th," reports Sir Horace Mann, who was then in Rome, "the Margrave and Margravine went to see the country house of Cardinal Valenti, and were splendidly entertained there by his order." "*La Vigne Valenti*," she calls it, the old name by which the country houses round Rome and certain towns in Italy were called. The garden was unfinished, but she was charmed with the little house, furnished, after her own heart, in Chinese taste, and resembling some of her rooms in the Ermitage.

But though with all the tentacles of her mind outstretched, and absorbing through every pore, Wilhelmina found time to remember Frederic in this long rush of sight-seeing.

"I have just made an acquisition," she writes, "which gave me infinite pleasure. It is an ancient painting, according to all the amateurs, quite one of the best. It has been stolen from the town of Pompeii, and carried here. I have snatched it, so to speak, out of the paws of some English people who had already fixed their

choice upon it. I take the liberty of sending it to you, my dearest brother, begging you not to say that it comes from Naples. I will do my best to have it well packed, but you must unpack it with great care, for it might peel off."

Nothing was too good for Frederic, who was ever in her mind. The finest of her finds is on the mantelpiece in his bedroom at Sans Souci, a Dionysius of *rosso antico*, above the fire-screen embroidered in gold by her own hands.

On St. Peter's Eve the Pope came back to Rome from Castel Gandolpho, and the Margravine saw some fine shows. There was the funeral of a Cardinal, but the *catafalque* so small she thought—and the annual ceremony of the *Hacquenée*, as she spells it, the presentation of a white hackney by the King of Naples to the Pope as his Suzerain. It took place at the Vatican, Cardinal Colonna performed the ceremony, and at night there were fireworks at the Castle of St. Angelo, which the Margrave and Margravine saw from a garden near St. Peter's, Montori. On St. Peter's Day they saw the Pope officiate at St. Peter's, heard vespers, saw the Girandole at Princess Corsini's, and the fireworks in honour of the King of Naples.

"On the 30th," writes Mann, "the Margrave and Margravine of Baireuth, after having observed the curiosities of this city and the ceremonies on the Festival of St. Peter, set out on their journey to Venice, having expressed their satisfaction for the marks of attention that have been shewn them, and then to acknowledge it the Margrave went in person to Cardinal Valenti, and on his return to his lodging sent two of his gentlemen with their compliments to the Pope, to whom they were introduced."

Only so much did the delicate political situation of the day allow of intercourse between a Protestant ruling Prince and the occupant of the Papal throne. Wilhelmina had laughed at the ridiculous reports as to her and her husband's conversion to Romanism, but even she dare not fly in the face of prejudice.

The Margrave, who, doubtless, preferred riding in the cool of the morning, set off first. His wife followed

two days later, travelling by night, to Terni. Driving across through the Appenines by Spoleto and Loretto, she was welcomed at Ancona by salutes. At Fano she caught the Margrave up, and they found an opera.

From this out she had a feast of the Italian operatic music she loved. There was a concert next day, then the Margrave rode on ahead again. At Bologna more sights, and more music. She left Bologna feeling ill, and on joining the Margrave at Ferrara found him ill too. At the little country house of Marquis Cervelli, they both lay for three days ill with fever, and then on —the Margrave by land, the Margravine down the Po— to Venice, the "*bonne bouche*," as Frederic had called it, of the Italian wanderings.

Here they found Algarotti, and spent a delightful five days, finding him a pleasant relief to the Prussian *charge d'affaires*, one Cataneo, "a boring dandy," wrote Frederic: "I could have wished that the Holy Father had been your *cicisbeo* in his place" (!)

They saw the Doge taken in state to church, the gondola races, and heard much singing both in churches and in the theatre, being treated with all honours, ladies and gentlemen attached to their service, and the gifts of the Republic presented to the sound of trumpets and cymbals. Algarotti wrote to the King lamenting the Margrave and Margravine's flying visit. "During the extremely short stay that she has made at Venice the Government *s'est extrêmement empressé* to render her all sorts of honours. From honours it was about to pass on to *fêtes*, if Her Royal Highness had been able to spare a few more days to the attentions of the Government. It would have liked, Sire, to *fêter*, as they had honoured, in the person of Her Royal Highness the sister of the greatest of Kings."

Next on to Padua, to pay a visit to the "Swan" at his own house, and be entertained by the singers Wilhelmina loved. Then on to Verona—one last look at Roman remains—and then—home.

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[*Face page* 241, *Vol. II.*

THE NEW CASTLE, BAIREUTH, BUILT BY THE MARGRAVE AND MARGRAVINE

CHAPTER VII

THE LULL BEFORE THE STORM

The new castle.—An ill prophecy.—A surprise visit.—Last touches to the Ermitage.—"Earthquakes in divers places."—A gloomy autumn.—The crowning of Frederic.—War rumblings.—Voltaire accuses the Margravine of theft!—The death of the "Laïs" Duchess.—The Margravine's illness.—The founding of the Baireuth Academy of Art.—The Margravine's opera.—The sky darkens.—Peace or war?

On her return home, in August, the Margravine found the new castle ready, and entered into possession of her "New Jerusalem," as Frederic called it. Exteriorly far from striking, the erection is not unworthy of his jibe at it as a "stable," and from the Margravine's own criticisms of palaces like that at Anspach and Pommersfeld, one cannot but see how little the New Schloss came up to her ideal. The rissault is squat, the long line of the building and of the roof ugly. But St. Pierre was probably hampered by want of means and want of time. The Margrave and Margravine were houseless; the castle was to be run up quickly in order that they might have a roof over their heads. It stands well, in an oblong *platz*, formerly the riding-school, in the middle of which is the equestrian statue of Margrave Christian Ernst caracoling over a prostrate Turk, his favourite dwarf by his side, while on the base of the pedestal are illustrated the four rivers which rise in the Fichtelgebirge —the Main, the Naab, the Saale, and the Eger. This

statue the Margravine had had removed, first from its original site in the inner to the outer court of the old castle, and thence to its present position. The change was not popular among the good folk of Baireuth. "They have hunted out the old Margrave," they said; "they themselves will be hunted out"; a prophecy which indeed came true of the race of Brandenburg Margraves in less than fifty years.

The entrance to the castle is low, but wide. It leads into a vaulted hall wide enough to admit of a coach passing out into the gardens through the opposite doors. The stairway is the broad stairway that the Margravine admired. The principal rooms are on the first floor. The Baireuth Hohenzollerns copied Berlin —witness Christian Ernst and his Long Bridge at Erlangen. Wilhelmina, who remembered Monbijou at the Ermitage, now remembered the Town Palace at Potsdam when building her new castle, and the Banqueting Hall at Baireuth has marble pillars and a blue frieze to the gold ceiling, like the former. All these state apartments look into the Hofgarten, with its long, straight avenue, broken by a round pond with ornamental bridge. Shrubberies hide Wagner's villa, and his grave, in the garden which opens out of it. These state apartments form a long suite, some eighteen rooms, with elaborate rococo decorations bearing the impress of Wilhelmina's feeling for the art of Bussi and Andrioli, and her truly feminine instinct for detail. The ceilings are especially fine. But there is a faint difference perceptible from the decorative art at the Ermitage. The fashion in taste was just on the change. Severity was feebly beginning to make itself felt, "Louis XV. frivolity, and china monstrosities, pseudo-classical details and unsymmetrical scroll-work, which the ingenuity of the Frenchman developed from the acanthus of Rome," had reached its climax, and the pendulum had just begun to swing.

Charming is the Turkey Room, creamy walls embossed

with bronze turkeys and parrots with a variegated glint of colour running through them, enclosed in panels of gilt trellis-work up which twist coloured floral sprays. The attitude of the birds is full of life and action. The Music Room is very beautiful. It shows the change of rococo from 1740 to 1754. The ceiling is Orpheus playing, and the animals listening—dear departed Folichon among the number, immortalised here, as at the Ermitage, and in his mistress's statue and portrait.

On the walls, beneath the gilt trophies of musical instruments and foliage, hang a series of pastel portraits, all by Roslin. In the Music Room of the Ermitage, which was so distinctly her home, Wilhelmina hung the pictures of her women friends. Here, in the castle, she collected those of her acquaintance in the art world who had given her so many hours of enjoyment on the stage. All members of the opera or theatrical company: from the Conductor Kleinknecht down to the *prima ballerina*, they are each individual and living. But the original black frames were replaced by gilt ones by Louis II. of Bavaria, and the portraits no longer stand out against the trellis-work as Wilhelmina, in better taste, had designed. Each picture is labelled and dated at the back in the Margravine's own hand. The pastels are :—

Actors: Blondeval, Merval, 1751. Garnier, 1750.

Actresses: Fleury, Schuman, 1751, *Danseuse* Camargot, 1745, Jassinte, Anna Fiorina, and Rosina Balby, 1751.

On the left wall: Mlle. Danine Lebrun. On the back wall: Giacomo Zaghieri, 1751, Mlle. Celerini, 1748, Stephanino Leonardi, Mde. Froment, Merval.

In another room are three pastels of Wilhelmina's own painting, rather artificial copies of contemporaries, and representing allegorical virtues, as Lucrezia, chastity. Cleopatra with asp is the best, representing courage; the others are too flat. This allegorical taste

was the result partly of her training, partly of her speculative tendencies. A plain painting of nature did not satisfy one who was essentially an actress born. Wilhelmina was at home with actors and actresses, and in her element in anything connected with the stage and illusion; unconsciously she acted all her life, as princesses must to a certain extent, but more so.

The Cedar Room, in the centre of the garden front, looks straight up the avenue to the pond. It was Frederic's inspiration. "This wood, dumb as it is, will remind you of a brother who loves you tenderly," he had written, when procuring it. There was no room suitable for his exquisite present at the Ermitage, and so Wilhelmina panelled her new dining-room with it. But it was too low, and so she cleverly added a frieze of cedar-wood palms in relief, with gilt tree-tops, probably instigated by Frederic's admiration of Bibiena's palm-wood scene in *L'Ouomo*. There are turkeys again on the ceiling, and mirrors set in the walls. Napoleon coveted this cedar dado exceedingly, and the story goes that the wily steward, jealous for his master's property, invented an apparition of the White Lady which drove *le petit caporal* hurriedly away out of the white-and-green bedroom, where he was reposing, to the Ermitage. He left behind his little iron camp-bed, which is still shown in the basement gallery.

Wilhelmina made a little Japanese room, with Japanese figures in panels framed in stiff chrysanthemums, and beautiful chairs painted with pagodas; a Chinese room, with Chinese panels and a lattice-work with blue and white convolvulus climbing up it, and the same on the ceiling and in the shell alcoves.

The ground floor is all vaulted, and opens on to the garden. At the end of the suite is a *Sala Terena* in the style of the Ermitage Grotto-Room, and like one at Pommersfeld. It was in the taste of the time, a taste which came from Italy. The walls are inlaid with

pearly mussel-shells, and there is a fountain in the corner, a peacock of stone and marble.

Though the Margrave had his Natural History Museum in the new Palace, there is no china collection of the Margravine's to be seen at the New Castle. It probably all perished in the fire, and she had not the heart to begin again. Nor is there a library, as at Sans Souci. Her books, we know, she had saved to a certain extent. But ill-health and the preoccupation of the war probably hindered her from arranging them. For the librarian of the Erlangen University, to whom she bequeathed her library, found it after her death all lying in one of the ground-floor rooms of the New Castle covered with dust and plaster. That Wilhelmina could have thus treated her most faithful companions is very suggestive of the mental stress and strain of her last years.

Immediately upon the return of the Margrave and Margravine their son-in-law and daughter came to pay them a surprise visit, but they only stayed two days. Wilhelmina wrote to Frederic that "the Duke has greatly improved. I thought him much steadier. He is putting his affairs in excellent order, is doing away with all foolish expenses, and increasing his army."

But it was a happy home-coming. Frederic reassured his sister about war rumours. It was a long way from the Ohio to the Spree, and the goddess of war was a great lady and travelled slowly; at present she had only reached the English Channel. Wilhelmina was busy over another opera libretto, and also over a wonderful work of art, a copy of the Palatine and Capitoline Hills as they used to be, which she writes she will venture to send to Frederic if he does not think her very foolish. But "*Colin a voyagé*"! Frederic was laid up from a bad fall from his horse in July, and she sent him on her return her singer Stephanino to amuse him, and to add to the

gaiety of Prince Ferdinand's marriage, which took place in September, and the singer covered himself with glory.

At the Ermitage Wilhelmina occupied herself that autumn on a sad memorial. Near the old Ermitage, to the east, close to a trim beech hedge, stands a masonry pile of ancient, ruinous appearance. In the middle are three steps, but the real entrance is concealed. The slab of the topmost step is cracked into several pieces, the others still undamaged. The floor of this building is of square stones, the walls of brick, and at the top it ends in *débris*. Loose stones and slabs lie about in such overhanging and dangerous positions that they look as if they might fall at any moment. In front of the walls stand four stone pillars, more or less damaged with time. On the walls and the spring of the roof are the remains of frescoes. This building is intended to represent the entrance to the cave in the hill of Posilippo, called Virgil's grave. Wilhelmina brought a model of it from Italy, and it was built by Gontart, architect, and the master mason Leithold. Below the topmost step is a small vault containing three little coffins. In one of these sleeps Folichon. Thus is Virgil's grave associated with both her darlings, her brother and her dog.

Virgil's grave was one of the last erections the Margravine made in the garden of the Ermitage, though later she improved the gardens themselves. In the south she had immensely admired the Italian style of garden, and had not made acquaintance with Cardinal Albani, the great Roman gardener of the century, in vain, and both she and Frederic are worthy of being ranked with him. Her taste for water works had also been whetted in Italy, though before she saw the Roman fountains she had studied them from Foldes and Ventarini's engravings in Giovanni di Roma's great work. She now tried to blend together the garden and the country round it. Having seen Rome she imagined Roman

scenery and fitted in the Baireuth landscape; but there were no views to be seen from the *points de vue* like those from the Villa gardens round Rome. How one longs to have had her own description of the Ermitage as she has now made it!

In the autumn, as usual, to the hunting castles for the sport. The Margravine began to suffer from her eyes. What a deprivation this must have been to her whose greatest pleasure was in reading! Frederic sent her music, grapes from his hot-houses, his poetry to criticise. But the weather was horrid, and "enough to give you the spleen," she wrote to him. To add to her depression Bonin died, who had done so much to improve and arrange the municipal and military affairs of Baireuth. Then came the appalling news of the Lisbon earthquake.

To thoughtful minds this phenomenon always gives much food for reflection. North Germany felt the effects of the shock, and the discussion of it tinges Frederic's and Wilhelmina's letters. Voltaire wrote a poem about it; Frederic wished it had engulfed the English and French Colonies in America, and thus brought about peace!

A relief to these gloomy topics and depressing influences was the arrival at Baireuth of a new operatic star, Rosa, who had been at Berlin, and the performance of a new *intermezzo*.

The Margravine suffered much from headaches. Sitting up was impossible for any length of time and any study was a weariness to the flesh. Yet suffering and ill-health had not impaired Wilhelmina's looks. Count Lehndorff, writing at this time in his *Journal Secret*, mentions that "her appearance was that of a person of twenty-six." As a Christmas present she sent Frederic her portrait, a copy of Pésne's, for his new gallery at Sans Souci, and also many of her Italian spoils of curios. Thus it comes about that the best of the Margravial Italian collection is at Berlin. Frederic

was delighted, though grieved that she should thus strip herself for him. As to her portrait, he writes:

"My gallery, my dear sister, only needs your portrait to sanctify it. . . It has been painted by great masters, and the cleverness of their brushes will not give greater value to their subject than your portrait already has."

The New Year, 1756, found Wilhelmina quite ill. Happily for her it was a very mild winter, or she would have felt it extremely after passing the previous one in the south. Larks sang in January, and there was no more cold afterwards. But she suffered from pain and sleeplessness. "I had recourse to sermons, but they bored me instead of sending me to sleep." There was a three weeks' silence on her part to Frederic, but he received reminders of her in the shape of some of her Italian sketches and plans of Roman remains, and a piece of a fresco. The genuineness of the latter, however, Frederic, always on guard against Italian *postiches*, permitted himself to doubt, as it was painted in oil colours, of which the ancient Romans did not know the secret. In return he sent her a snuff-box of a new yellow stone like amber just found in Silesia. Frederic was immersed in dull politics, but wrote soothingly to his sister that he thought she need have no fears of war in her parts yet, in fact that he did not know himself which way matters would trend—peace or war.

Three new poems Frederic had sent her amused Wilhelmina during her illness, especially the "*Bonnet de Ane*," "of which the *locale*," she writes, her mind still running on Italy, "must be Ovid's country of exile," and explains to Frederic that her "*carneval*," a swollen face, has made her quite unrecognisable. The disfigurement annoyed her; she alludes to it more than once. A fever which followed has prevented her writing to him; she goes on to expatiate on the amusement the poem has given her, and adds pieces of news about Austria—the

dread there of war, the size of the Imperial Army, of which she has been shown the list, 200,000 men, but many deserters, and its officers dissatisfied; last, but not least, the ascendency of Kaunitz over the Empress, who wears a *bonnet d'Ane!*

The allusions to this poem crop up continually in the next few letters, jokes only understood by the brother and sister, and veiling sneers and jibes at Austria and Frederic's other enemies.

While Wilhelmina was laid aside, some cases of her Italian purchases arrived. In one of them was the laurel wreath from Posilippo, which she at once sent to Frederic, with congratulations on his new kingdom—he had been elected King of Corsica. The delighted sister wished it had been Italy: then "we should have had another century of the Caesars." Wilhelmina had seen what an enlightened modern ruler like Frederic could have done for the Renaissance of Italy. She goes on to dedicate to him her wreath of laurel:

"I must confess to have committed a great fault towards you, my dear brother, a fault which has drawn on me the Divine wrath, and the illness which I have just had is a punishment. Being at Naples I went one day to a mountain where there were a quantity of old remains, and I saw at some distance the ruins of a tomb. I drew near, but what was my surprise! a voice came out of the depths of this pyramid and called me by my name: 'Approach,' it said, 'I am Virgil. I was born to sing of heroes; the gods, to reward my ardour, have transformed me into a laurel that I may crown the greatest of mortals, as I can no longer sing of him. It is to thee that this honour is reserved.' The voice ceased. As quickly as possible I plucked some branches of this wonderful tree. Hardly had I twined a wreath when it withered away. A luminous inscription appeared on the pyramid. It was in verse, and this was the sense of it:

"'My shade for ever quits this haunt, as no mortal will now be worthy of my laurels.'

"My servants packed up the box containing the precious relics, with many other things, which I have only just received. Virgil, annoyed by my forgetfulness, has appeared to me, threatening me with the wrath of the gods if I did not at once obey his command. I send you, my dear brother, this marvellous wreath, which is doubly due to you as the disciple both of Apollo and of Mars."

This letter, quite in her usual strain, cheered Frederic, who had been anxious about her. At first he was "quite abashed at receiving a laurel wreath from your hands." But he "pulled himself together by remembering that Virgil was old enough to be in his dotage, and that in French kitchens they honour hams by giving them laurel wreaths like heroes," and goes on to say that she thinks too much of him, and writes a "general confession" of his weaknesses, for her absolution, adding that he is in a coil of thorny negotiations, and overwhelmed with business. A special envoy had come from France and required delicate handling. Would Frederic join with her or not? He had made a Subsidy Treaty with England. The feeling there is well expressed in a letter of Pitt:

"I feel the most grateful sentiments of veneration and zeal for a Prince who stands unshaken, a bulwark of Europe against the most powerful and malignant confederacy that ever yet threatened the independence of mankind."

Maria Theresa, never resting till she could begin to rescue her lost provinces, was raising all Europe against Frederic. But he feared to bore his sister by putting her *au courant*. The need for Wilhelmina in politics was not yet.

But a new tone is now audible in her letters, a tone which will go on increasing in force. Though Frederic shuts her out of politics, she is beginning to assert herself, and will not be excluded. Her life is now and will be till the end entirely one, and only one with his. While he is busy working for the peace of Europe, she thinks it so kind of him to worry over her health. She feels of no more use to him than the dear departed Biche, except that they both loved him, and were utterly faithful to him. But Biche amused him, and she is good for nothing. Mindful of the fate of the "*Pucelle*," she had locked up the "*Bonnet d'Ane*," and no one will ever see it. Yet, even as she wrote, she was being accused herself of literary kidnapping.

Voltaire broke a long silence on February 17th, writing from Maurion, near Lausanne, and sending her his poem on the "Destruction of Lisbon." With the King he was getting on better. Through the channel of Pradés they were corresponding, and the poet was delighted at Frederic's turning his "*Mérope*" into an opera. "It was all very fine, but he ceases to love me," he moaned.

To the Margravine he wrote with the nearest approach to recrimination he ever employed. But he delicately veils his accusations under pseudonyms:

"You are of those divinities who are only made to shower kindnesses. They say of God that He can do no evil, but only permits it.

"*Madame la Princesse de Passau-Saarbruck* has sent to Paris a certain work on Natural Religion, and which I can swear to your Royal Highness that I gave a copy to you alone. The King, your brother, has never given up the original. It was a very unfinished poem, which I have much corrected since, and this is how it begins:—

"Souveraine sans faste, et femme sans faiblesse,
Vous dont la raison mâle et la ferme sagesse
Sont pour moi des attraits plus chers, plus précieux,
Que les feux séduisants qui partent de vos yeux,
Digne œuvre d'un Dieu, connaissons notre maître."

Nearly two years before Voltaire had sent the Margravine a copy dedicated to her. A literary dispute arose over the dedication, and the only conclusion one can come to is that the poem was also dedicated to the Duchess of Gotha, as well as to Frederic, who possessed the original. Voltaire now accuses the Margravine, under the thin veil of a non-existent Princess of Saarbruck, of having it printed. The episode was the nearest approach to a quarrel that the friends ever had.

In February the Dowager Duchess of Würtemberg ended her notorious career. Wilhelmina sarcastically wrote to the King that the Duchess's Paradise will surely be one like Mahomet's, whereas her own idea of bliss is an eternity spent with her dear brother, where, instead of Alleluias, she would endlessly assure him of

her affection. Frederic replied that doubtless his niece would not weep over her mother-in-law, whose departure was a real blessing for everyone. Though driven mad with politics he assured Wilhelmina that they would never stifle his feelings for her, feelings dating from childhood; her health was everything, Europe could "gang its ain gait" without him, and he adds a sneer at the canting Empress, and says he had a new "*Bonnet d'Ane*" to give away.

Not long after the arrival of the poem on Lisbon came a real earthquake at Culmbach, and a terrible storm, ushering in, as it were, to Wilhelmina's foreboding imagination, "wars and rumours of wars." She fell ill again with fever and inflammation. Her head swelled and her nose became twice its length. When sufficiently recovered to write again to Frederic, she said she wished she could send this long nose to Paris! For an emissary of France had passed through Baireuth; Austria was worrying all round for help. But Frederic was more concerned about Wilhelmina than about Maria Theresa. From her bad and trembling handwriting after this second attack, he saw that she was really worse than she thought, and wrote her an imploring letter, begging her to take more care of herself. He asked that her doctor should write to him how she was, and begs her to remember that any course of waters should be combined with peace of mind and a strict diet. She was not to write herself if it hurt her, but let her doctor keep him informed, he adds pathetically.

One of the fruits of the Margravine's Italian journey was the founding of the Academy of Arts and Sciences. Shortlived, it died with the Margrave, and art became extinct in Baireuth for over a century. As the University at Erlangen was to introduce Anglo-French intellectual development at Baireuth, so was the Academy to bring in Italian art. It was a noble aim and the inception was purely personal. The Margrave installed the Academy in the house in Friedrichstrasse which he

had occupied after the fire and subsequently bought, and which is now the Royal Post Stables. Mirabeau was its first Director; at his death, when the Margrave himself took it over, there were ten professors of painting, drawing, architecture, perspective, sculpture, French, engraving, music. The instruction was free, and the Margrave was much pleased with the success of native artists.

Frederic's *Mérope* had inspired his sister with another attempt at libretto-writing. *Amalthea, Drama per la Musica*, was written, like *L'Uomo*, in French prose, and put into Italian verse by Stampiglia. It was an improvement on the allegorical style of the former, being historical. It was, of course, classic; the scene is laid at Carthage. Hamilkar, the usurper, has murdered his predecessor and married his wife, Amalthea. The victorious General Polidamas he discovers to be Amalthea's lost son by her first husband. Hamilkar and Amalthea have a son, Massina, who is jealous of Polidamas because he is his successful rival for the hand of the Princess Zamis, and Hamilkar fears he will avenge his father. Amalthea and Polidamas are being led to death when Polidamas's tutor rescues them by a band of Carthagenians leagued against the Tyrant, whom they kill. Massina prefers to kill himself rather than owe his life to his step-brother. An entirely fictitious plot in historical setting the Margravine thought would give her more freedom of action. She believed her plot had the advantage of appealing to the imagination through its novelty, while the music, confessedly a *pot-pourri* of different masters, as the second act shows, speaks to the heart.

The opera was in rehearsal early in June, and Wilhelmina, able to attend, "received her ears," a subtle joke of *le Bonnet d'Ane*. In May she had not been able to go to any opera, and wrote to Frederic only between respites of illness. But she managed to see the performance of Le Quint, the first actress of Paris, whom she

had temporarily secured, and was delighted with her. The Margravine's theatrical establishment gave her a good deal of anxiety. Added to the flirtations of the actresses, and the jealousies, one actor had been injured by falling scenery, and now the tenor had died suddenly. Her antiquarian interests also occupied "her exile." One of her gentlemen, who was in Italy, wrote to her about the discovery of the two great temples at Salerno, half Greek, half Egyptian, and, she told Frederic, the oldest in Italy, and she will send him drawings.

These are almost the last vestiges of interest in operas. She no longer enjoyed them, and Frederic was working up "an opera which seems like to end in a catastrophe." From henceforward there was to be no room for such trivialities, as the war clouds lowered with increasing gloom, and his fate hung in the balance. The sister's letters to him became almost entirely political, except when reiterating her love and anxiety.

To the Treaty, signed in January, between Prussia and England, France, now since April at war at sea with England, retaliated by a Treaty with Austria, which had been secretly insinuated by the Pompadour long before. Frederic had made an implacable enemy of the all-powerful favourite by his openly-expressed contempt for her. Maria Theresa, on the other hand, had cajoled and flattered her. The work of years seemed now to be nearly ready. War was only a question of months, or even weeks now, the only doubt was, who should begin?

The middle of June saw Wilhelmina back at the Ermitage, in wretched health, but happy in the place where she last saw Frederic. The change suited her, and, too weak to walk, and yet ordered exercise, she rode, she writes, as slowly as did the Knight of the Rueful Countenance, a little donkey she had named Rosinante, a lady similarly mounted following her.

In addition to the darkening political atmosphere, there were family troubles afoot in Hesse, and in

Sweden, where Ulrica was fighting with her Parliament, and not considerate, as Frederic put it, of the republican spirit of her nation. Thus, all round, the outlook was gloomy, and Wilhelmina, at the Ermitage, sat breathless and apprehensive, her thoughts at Potsdam, while Frederic decided on peace or war.

WILHELMINA THE DIPLOMAT

CHAPTER I

THE THUNDERCLAP

A first diplomatic effort.—The King's eyes and ears.—The performance of *Amalthea*.—The storm bursts.—The difficult position of Baireuth.—Frederica separates from her husband.—Wilhelmina's battle.—Protestant Baireuth and Roman Catholic South Germany.—A shaky minister.—The Margravine's dealings with the French envoy.—Frederic takes yet another hint from her.—The coercion of the Circle.—News important and news false.—The secret agent from Paris.—Frederic's policy with France.—The Baireuth ticklish game.

On June 26th a courier had brought a letter, saying it was war. Wilhemina was confident in Frederic's genius and his army, but depressed, and fearful of the dangers and fatigues he would have to endure. She arranged to let him know from time to time what was passing among their odious neighbours, Austria and Bamberg-Würzburg. The Margrave had means of getting news, and wrote she could pass letter to the King by sending them through Hesse, as, though Saxony had never opened letters yet, it might do so in the future. A very secret P.S. added that the Empress was writing incessantly to stir up the Circles in her favour, and it shows Wilhelmina's perspicacity and sound judgment that, before Frederic made up his mind to be the first in the field, we find her urging him to be beforehand with his enemies, and especially, if he was sure of the co-operation of Hanover, which would intimidate Austria. Touchingly

the woman and the sister peeps out again behind the politician, saying how happy she is to be of use, even in unhappy circumstances.

Frederic did not need a second telling. Three days later we find him sending to the Minister Finkenstein the news he has received "from a sure hand."

The war that was now coming was much nearer home to Baireuth and the sister principality than had been the case in the previous Silesian wars. France was but a half-hearted ally to Frederic then, and he had joined with her none too willingly. These Middle German little States he required to give support to Charles VII. at the back, and he expected no action from them, merely a waiting on his nod. There was no question then of splitting the Imperial ranks. Frederic's policy was too embryonic, and the European situation too problematical for any violent rent to be thought of. Now things had changed. Directly Frederic took the field, his enemies dropped the masks behind which they had plotted against him for years. The Circles of the Empire found themselves involved in the great conflict of Prussia, which was the outcome of the French-English war. The latter had now passed the Channel and flooded Germany. The whole Empire was dragged in, except the Upper Rhine and Swabian Circles, specially leagued together.

Wilhelmina became now eyes and ears for the King in South Germany—as her frequent letters show. In July, through an agent, young Ellrodt, the Minister's son, who had gone to Nuremberg, she heard of the cavalry and artillery and the Croats being poured into Moravia. She heard, too, that all the Empire would declare for the King, being incensed against his enemies. She heard hints of the secret treaty between Austria and France. The Empress had been advised by Kaunitz to ally herself with France and to accept an Italian State in lieu of Silesia. But, on the other hand, the Margravine, at the same time, through her many

links with France, of whom the most important, now Montperni was dead, was Mirabeau, received hints that France would like to be friends with Frederic. After all which news, the writer's heart sinks, and her letter ends with a lament that it is such a century since she has seen him!

An Italian bishop, whose acquaintance the Margravine had made in Rome, passed through Baireuth about this time. He had been taking the Cardinal's hat to the Archbishop of Toledo. Through him the Margravine was able to send her brother news that yet another power was against him. The Empress had gained over Farniello, the Spanish Minister, bribing him with a gold snuff-box containing her portrait and a large sum of money. The entanglements of her sister Ulrica in Sweden made Wilhelmina anxious, and annoyed Frederic, who had plenty of worries at this moment without them. Wilhelmina looked forward with dread to what August might not bring. In the middle of July news reached her anxious ears which she hastened to send on to Berlin. The Empress, she learnt, had not been ill. The illness was but a ruse of the heroic woman in order to come and examine *incognito* her fortresses of Olmütz, Spielberg, and Brünn. Workmen in thousands were busy, sent from Vienna, as were munitions of war. No one was allowed to leave Bohemia or Moravia.

Armed with this information the King, in the middle of July, dispatched an express courier to his Resident, Klinggräf, at Vienna, to ask for an audience and for a reply as to what all these preparations meant. Was the Empress in league against Prussia? Previously, in a secret conference, at Potsdam, with his two generals and War Minister, he had laid before their astonished eyes the copies of the secret documents he had had wormed out of the Dresden archives, which revealed to them the existence of the ten-years'-old, so-called Treaty of Warsaw, between Austria, Russia and France, for partitioning up Prussia. Frederic put all his wonderful

fighting machine into marching order, gave the final orders and details, and awaited Maria Theresa's reply.

To his sister he wrote that the murder was out, that he had one foot in the stirrup, and he begged for her help as intelligence officer, about the preparations afoot in her neighbourhood. She, away in the south, tells him that she hears of nothing but the Austrian preparations, though Vienna was still dallying and evasive. The details she gives throws an important light on Maria Theresa's shifty conduct at this juncture.

In view of the rocky, mountainous country in which they were going to fight, only horses and mules, no waggons, were to be used. Pontoons had been carried into Bohemia; the pay had been augmented, and munitions of war in larger quantities sent to Moravia. Prince Lichtenstein was to command 80,000 men in Bohemia with full powers, apart from the war Council; Braun, with 20,000, to command in Moravia; Prince Hilperhausen to command the Croats and Hungarians, some 50,000 strong, adding the Italian regiments. A requisition of money, 5,000,000 gulden, had been made in Lower Austria, and Prince Charles of Lorraine, the Emperor's brother, had passed through Nuremberg, and was waiting for Prince Conti. The alarming rumour of a league between France and Russia had even reached her. It might be false. Poor Wilhelmina was dreadfully anxious about this, and at the Swedish news that the King, her brother-in-law, has been arrested, and will not be able to sleep in peace, she writes, till she knows if it be true. But a consolation to her is the thought that in the union of hearts is our happiness.

By the end of July came a letter from Frederic. He is awaiting the Austrian reply, and has given his courier a chance. If, after that,

" they show themselves deaf to the voice of reason, I shall do what everyone else would do in my place, with my conscience clear from all blame, and an entire confidence in the justice of my cause. Do

not let the future alarm my dear sister, it is uncertain, it is happily veiled from us;"

the philosopher goes on:

"prepared to receive with a calm countenance whichever liquor Jupiter wishes to shower on us out of his two urns."

The letter found Wilhelmina feeling ill and stupid with headaches and pains, and leading a monotonous life, chiefly in her room. Her *Amalthea* had been performed and was a success, to which two of her artistes had contributed, young people, one a pupil of Bardi's, the other a very clever musician. She had engaged Rumietti, the finest voice in Italy, as second lady, and the quartette had been fine. But her thoughts were with Frederic. Her hopes and trust were in Cæsar and his fortunes, in spite of all the newspapers said, and the voice of rumour. She was living in her New Jerusalem, not best pleased with it. "Every kind of misfortune happens to us and our buildings. One castle has been burnt and this one is falling down. It is so wretchedly built that I am afraid of being burnt alive in it, and the walls are so thin that I cannot stand it during the winter." She added a list of military details; a fortnight later she wrote again, building "castles in the air," and hoping that the year may pass peaceably.

The Court was moving to Kaiserhammer for the autumn, where the new hunting castle was recently finished. It contained a fine library of books, and was a favourite resort both of the Margrave and Wilhelmina.

But Wilhelmina's hopes were vain. The lull was but the hush before the storm. She received a hurried and impatient letter from Frederic, dated August 23rd. He was tired of waiting on Austria. Three days later, having received a studiously evasive and prevaricative answer, he set out at the head of his army for Saxony.

In Wilhelmina's letter, in reply to the above, we seem to see into her quivering soul. She had nearly

attempted to intercept him at Leipsig herself, but did not know when he would pass there. She had no address, and they were off to Kaiserhammer, whence it would be more difficult to get news. Rumour said Frederic was marching into Bohemia. Wilhelmina, anxious and trembling, comforted herself with the thought that death would deliver her if anything should happen to him, with whom go her wishes and her hopes. She trembled for the state of her aged mother, and for Berlin, at his departure. But, at the close of the letter, her spirits rise. She says she feels as if she could like to fight his proud enemy herself, for Maria Theresa spread such false rumours. She cheers Frederic on, calling him Cæsar, Defender of the Faith, who will charm Fortune as he charms hearts.

Then a ten days' tension. No letter from Frederic filtered through to the anxious sister, only more mendacities of the "lying Jade." She heard of the bloodless occupation of Dresden, of the flight of the King of Poland, and began to have a faint hope that perhaps, after all, all might pass off without a blow. She begged for an address to write to, for she had collected items of information. Folard, the French Envoy at the Diet, was now to be sent to the Bavarian Court. Shortly she hoped to be able to send a table of the French forces, and she added a recommendation of a French geometrician, who might be useful in Frederic's engineering department. No detail was too small to escape Wilhelmina's keen ear and eye where her brother was concerned.

On September 20th, the Prussian King was outlawed by the Reichstag, as a disturber of the public peace, and a rebel against the Empire. The Margrave Frederic voted in the minority of six voices against sixty-six, as to declaring Imperial war against Frederic's overpowering predominance. It was a painful situation for the Margravate. Baireuth had to choose between the Empire and Frederic. Urged by Seckendorff, in

the pay of Austria, Anspach decided for the Kaiser. The Southern little principalities could not protect themselves by a middle course as could the larger, powerful, and individual Northern Princes, like Hanover, Brandenburg, or Saxony. In Franconia the more violently a refractory member opposed the Circle, the more he found his fellow members, especially those of an opposite faith, at his throat. Therefore, when the Margrave refused to accede to the third mandate to send his contingent, he was acting with more boldness than Anspach need have summoned up to take the same course, for to the east and north of Baireuth lay Bohemia and Saxony. An open joining of Prussia was, of course, out of the question. It would have meant the utter ruin of the Principality. In the long run Frederic could not detach any support on that side, however useful Baireuth might be to him in a military sense; and the Margrave was too weak to defend himself against his co-members of the Circle; much less could an open country like Baireuth, without fortresses, offer any front against the Imperial troops, strengthened as they were by Austria. Neutrality was the only course, if it could but be maintained.

Meanwhile, Maria Theresa was straining every nerve to push Braun's force through into Saxony and rescue the Saxon forces blockaded in the rocky wilderness of Königstein. Even the Imperial stud horses were sent to drag his guns and waggons. But Wilhelmina wrote to Frederic on Michaelmas Day, that she heard Braun does not mean to fight, only to entrench and harass with light troops. As to the French treaty, it was not popular at Vienna. Maria Theresa did not like it, but Kaunitz forced her; she was beginning to suspect France. Austrian deserters passed in great numbers through Baireuth, and the Margravine picked up news. Eger had been reinforced with two hundred men, she hastened to tell Frederic. The townspeople would not have it put in a state of defence in spite of the danger.

How she wishes all Bohemia would take the same line!

The Margravine had other private anxieties at that moment. Her son-in-law had been with them for the shooting at Kaiserhammer. When they returned to Baireuth at the end of the month, he sent for the Duchess to join him. She came quickly enough, and then declined to go back with him to Stuttgart. Wilhelmina wrote to Frederic that she had had a lot of bother trying to arrange a reconciliation. She, herself, more philosophical than her daughter, thought the Duke improved, and was pleased with his mind and his character. When on the Bohemian frontier he saw the Austrian troops and sent a list she enclosed to Frederic. Wilhelmina saw a possibility of "managing" Charles Eugene. He went away, and came back again; but her daughter remained obdurate.

As to Frederica's character, we know little and hear little from her mother. It can easily be understood that Wilhelmina did not dilate upon her daughter's unhappy married life more than she could avoid to the author of that marriage. Yet never a word of blame or of recrimination does she let fall, much as she had to forgive Frederic, with regard to his godchild, while Frederic contemplates the state of things for which he was responsible with a coldness strange in the tenderest of brothers. Himself childless, it must be supposed that parental affection lay outside his ken.

Frederica had vacillated between inclination and jealousy for years. Now repugnance got the upper hand. This was her last and final flight from her tyrannical husband's roof. Charles Eugene went home alone, and retaliated by imprisoning her servants. But Frederica had not her mother's nervous dread of public scandal. She cared little what the world might say, though as long as her mother lived there was no final separation. But, after her death, Frederica obtained a divorce.

Failing to come to terms with the King of Poland as to neutrality, if nothing more, Frederic settled himself and Prussian officials at Dresden. Taking the incriminating papers out of the Archives, in spite of the personal resistance of the old Queen, in order to use them as a proof to the world of his just cause, Frederic, at the end of October, leaving the Saxons and their King bottled up at Pirna, fell upon the Austrians advancing under Braun to the Saxon rescue, at a place, he writes to Wilhelmina, "which seemed to me of happy omen, being yours, the village of Welmina. I found the Austrians here, near Lowositz, and after a fight of seven hours I put them to flight."

It was Wilhelmina's battle, in more meanings than one, fought in pursuance of her suggestion. "Your wish is fulfilled," is the significant phrase with which Frederic announces the victory. It was her clear-headed foresight led him thus to forestall the enemy.

Wilhelmina replied enthusiastically when she heard of the great victory. She wrote that she was a fatalist about his luck, that she wished she could find the tomb of Mars as she did that of Virgil, that she studied the map of Saxony all day. The anxiety had made her ill, she feared every moment another battle, and she sent the King a list of the French Army—most important to him. The absence of authentic news harassed her. All sorts of contradictory rumours came in; she heard that Frederic was wounded. She could not be in a worse hell, she writes, if indeed there be a future of pain.

"I am between life and death . . . if I dared, oh! my dear brother, I would run afoot to your camp, there to find the decision of my fate. My God! if your danger alone plunges me in despair, what will it be if I lose you! The strength of your army, the happiness of your country, and of all your family rests in your head alone. Forgive me if I forget myself! Affection and anxiety must excuse me. . . . I tremble—you understand me—there will be a good deal of noise now that the ice is broken. I will do my best to warn you of all I can discern, if I have enough strength left to write to you, for my state is still the same; and shall not be able to

stand it. Oh Heaven preserve my dear brother, and let me die; may all the blows fall on me if only he may live happy and well."

But her enthusiasm awakened in her a warlike spirit which was not noticeable in the former campaign. She was incensed with the treachery of Austria, and had hoped that the good omen of her name might have led to the extermination of the Austrian Army, and only that of the whole of that detestable race will satisfy her! Truly, indeed, was she "one soul" with Frederic.

She had her own anxieties at home. The enemy, Austria, was withdrawing 16,000 men from the Netherlands to the succour of Bohemia and Saxony, and the Margravial Imperial Regiment was to form part of this corps. Moreover, Würtemberg troops were to start. "The tocsin had sounded," wrote the Margravine. Not for over a fortnight did Wilhelmina get Frederic's letter above quoted, written in the glow of victory. Austrian troops from the Netherlands were to pass through Baireuth, but the Margravine, just off to winter at Erlangen, and anxious to warn her brother which route they will take, had no one to send, no one to trust. She felt herself in the lion's jaws.

Frederic, the very day he captured them, sent her news of the bloodless trapping of the Saxon host in the rocky defile of Saxon Switzerland. By return she replied in one of her bantering letters; one can see how bubbling over with pride and happiness she is! She had been so pleased to get his news, and expresses her pleasure in operatic and classical allusions, mingled with regrets for the illness of Cothenius. They both are so dependent on their doctor! Then she comes to business. It strikes her that Frederic might as well have news of the other armies advancing against him, the French, the Netherland, Austrian. So she suggested that two trusty, but disguised, Prussians should be sent secretly to Baireuth or Erlangen to the Marquis d'Adhémar. The fidelity of Voltaire's friend she had already tested. In this way

any repetition of an incident like the march of Count Grün through Baireuth territory in the Silesian War without Frederic being informed of it, would not be risked, nor would the Margrave be implicated. An open espousal of the Prussian cause would but ruin him without benefiting the King. She added that Folard, the French Envoy, was coming to Baireuth again, and that she would pick his brains. Indeed, Wilhelmina was making rapid strides in the difficult art of intelligence officer!

But towards the end of October the Court moved to Erlangen as usual, and communication was more difficult for Wilhelmina, as she was a day further off Frederic and the seat of war. But she buoyed herself up with hopes of the wholesale destruction of Braun, and that the winter might find her brother safe and sound at Potsdam. But, instead, came further complications. Von Witmann, the Austrian Minister, announced that he was coming to make a tour in the Franconian Circle. His mission was to announce from the Empress that she would, under no circumstances whatever, accept any neutrality. The same mandate was sent to the other States of the Circle, to Würzburg, Bamberg, and Nuremberg. There the Roman Catholic element was very strong, and the Margravine feared they would throw the balance on the wrong side. But the Margrave was trying with all his might to prevent such a misfortune, if only he could rely on the help of Protestant Princes. The Franconian Circle being the key of Saxony and Bohemia, there was well-grounded fear lest it should be seized, and the same game played as the King had himself played in Saxony. This was bad enough, and filled both Wilhelmina and the Margrave with anxiety. But there was worse. In a letter to Frederic she confides to him that their Minister, Ellrodt, is shaky, probably from cowardice, or, more likely she thinks, from the effect of Austrian bribes. The son of the Head of the Church

in Baireuth, he had absolute influence over the Margrave, and his son Fritz was rising as rapidly in favour and in office as his father had done. The other States of the Circle, and the Protestant Princes, also trusted Ellrodt. So tremblingly, and begging him to burn the letter, Wilhelmina ventures, in the hurry of starting for Erlangen, to scribble advice to the King. She suggests that he send Ellrodt, ostensibly as thanks for the news he gave her, a snuff-box with the Royal portrait, and that he tries to coax over the Duke of Würtemberg, who is all-powerful in the Swabian Circle. Poor Wilhelmina! torn in half! The Margrave, indeed, would not reproach her for her partisanship of Prussia, but many other people would blame her if they knew the advice she was giving. Frederic's imminent danger, however, urges her to it.

France was active. Folard, her Envoy at the Diet, was at Münich, trying to win over Bavaria. Both from Folard and from her old acquaintance at Lyons the Margravine had heard that France was also anxious for a *rapprochement* with Frederic. Belleisle was devoted to Frederic, and if the King would but make some advances, he would try to stop the march of the French Army. It was Wilhelmina's first attempt of several at diplomacy. She longed to act as mediator and peacemaker. She saw the storm growing very near and very heavy. All the Ministries had been bribed by Maria Theresa. Only religious feeling could deter the Princes from joining her, and the Roman Catholic rulers were in the majority. How feverishly Wilhelmina prays that Frederic may weather the hurricane!

The King took the Margravine's hint. He wrote to Ellrodt that—

"knowing your zeal for the interests of my house, as well as your ability, which should give you a marked influence in the deliberations of the Circle, I am persuaded that you will prudently use it in securing the adoption of neutrality in the Franconian Circle, a

course which is as essential for the safety of that Circle as it is for the true interests of the Margrave your master, which interests are inseparable from those of my royal house"—

and he did himself the pleasure to enclose a little mark of appreciation and esteem, doubtless the snuff-box.

In spite of Wilhelmina's hopes that the winter would find the King again in his green study at Potsdam, he took up his quarters at Dresden, whence he sent her some loot, the china she loved. Would that he had been at Prague! she wrote, disappointed, and sending him important news through Witmann of what Braun thought the King's next moves would be; and she also added information about the marching of the Netherland troops on Nuremberg, gleaned from an officer of the Margrave's Imperial Regiment, which was among them, and who had come to recruit in Baireuth, to raise it up to strength. Mirabeau she had sent to Stuttgart to see how things were there.

The neutrality question increased in importance, though Witmann, when he came to Baireuth, touched delicately on the subject. The Empress did not expect the two Margraves to take part against this House of Brandenburg. But the ecclesiastical States were active and debating; and this moderation of the Empress only made the Magravine suspect that their plans were not yet ripe. The war was drawing nearer. Shall we be martyrs? she asked. The Margrave, riding about the country, reported many Austrian desertions and many executions.

She wrote to Frederic from Erlangen—so close on the Bishop's frontiers—of the rage of the priests against him. He was being preached against and held up as the destroyer of religion. The Bishop of Würzburg was making much of the Prussian deserters. The Margravine even feared it might come to a religious war, in which case she was much amused to think of Frederic appearing as a Defender of the Faith in company with Luther and Calvin. If, however, he went to heaven with them, she

writes, he would be so bored that he would be in hell, and she chatters on in lighter vein, ending with how she wishes she were once again in the study at Potsdam with him! Since this horrible war began, she writes that she is wasting away, and in ceaseless agitation. Frederic tried to cheer her depression and soothe her racked nerves. Her health is the first and principal item in his letter; then comes his mention, veiled, lest the letter should be intercepted, of his preparation for the new campaign, and for the great work of freeing Germany from the oppressive yoke of the Holy Roman Empire. What if the Margrave did have to send his Imperial Contingent? These troops of the Princes would rather embarrass than assist Austria. Which, as the event showed, was true.

By the middle of November things looked no better. But the Bishop had indeed stopped the sermons and likewise the pay to the deserters. Wilhelmina sent Frederic an *on dit* that the saints had all put on Prussian uniforms because he had become Defender of the Faith! Though, up till now, everything had seemed to point towards neutrality, there came an alarm that the Austrians were coming into the Circle or on to the Swabian borders, in order to force Baireuth to declare itself. The Princes of the Circle were mobilising. The Margravine had a secret agent in Würzburg, trying to find out if it were true. She contrived to get news from Vienna too, and on November 15th writes to Frederic that she hears the 30,000,000 are exhausted at Vienna; that the Empress is asking for money from the Imperial towns and the immediate nobility; that Braun, who, with Prince Charles, tried to avoid war, was in evil odour with Kaunitz and the Council; that there were dissensions among the members of the Empire, but that the fear of Austria and the power of the ecclesiastical Princes kept them together.

The Margravine herself was satisfied with the turn events had taken, and with the King's retreat to Dresden,

as it was voluntary, though she would have preferred his winter quarters to be at Prague. His danger has been so great, she writes, that if anything happens to him, she is determined not to survive it. But Witmann kept running hither and thither, and announced to the Circle from Vienna that no neutrality would on any account be accepted, wrote the Margravine, towards the end of November. Braun, though ill at Prague, had sent to Vienna about the plans for next year's campaign; the army from the Netherlands had crossed the Rhine, 20,000 strong, and was at Brücksal, evidently aiming at the Circles!

Baireuth had a scare through Frederic's deserters escaping across a little strip of terrritory into Bohemia, and the Bailiff and the peasants were alarmed, though they did no harm. The Margravine heard that they had promised their officers to desert, and that the Saxons might follow their example.

The ubiquitous Witmann descended upon Anspach at the end of November. Seckendorff ably seconded him, and the whole Circle seemed likely to be in the hands of the Margrave of Anspach. The Council, however, was all right, scribbles Wilhelmina hurriedly, if Seckendorff does not get the upper hand.

Every few days she sent the King letters, enclosing details of troops and their march, and the report of one of the generals of the Circle. She also tells him that Braun's party is victorious at Vienna, and that Prince Charles, his rival, will not be sent to command the Imperial Army. All these details were extremely important for the King, as informing him of the enemy's movements on that side, and of the uniting of the Dutch and Empire army in the West. She also evolved a scheme for sending letters to his Hussars in Silesia by a courier. Illness did not check her zeal.

In the middle of December the Empress of Russia fell ill, and Wilhelmina wrote hopefully to Frederic that he would only have one fury to fight, the third,

Pompadour, being in his claws. Witmann paid Baireuth a visit, speaking fair, and saying that he did not expect the Margrave to take part against the King. It appeared that his coaxing at Anspach had not succeeded. Next came Folard to the Baireuth Court, much in the Margravine's confidence—as far as was good for him. He brought the unwelcome intelligence that his orders were to second the Court of Vienna in everything, except in violation of the Treaty of Westphalia, to which France would always keep. From Folard, however, Wilhelmina gathered secretly in conversation, that France would like to make friends with Prussia, and that she wanted peace to settle her Navy, so essential to her in the war with England ; that Austria was behaving badly, the whole question—priests and bribes.

In a letter, early in December, the Margravine mentioned a false report of the death of Benedict XIV. It had appeared to her, when in Rome, that Benedict, a patron of art and sciences, a disciplinarian and of estimable private character, was very much attached to Frederic. She heard there that the best way of getting any favour with him was to ask the King of Prussia ! But a month later the Pope recovered and published a bull against Frederic !

About this time there arrived at the Court of Baireuth a Chevalier de Vatan, a pleasant, well-mannered man, full of wit and humour, who much ingratiated himself with the Margravine, who thought he had a promising future before him. Vatan had come as secret agent from the French Court, but Fate ordained that Wilhelmina was not to make all the use of him she intended.

The Franconian Circle was still going on well, the Bishop of Bamberg behaving like an angel, but with his brother of Würzburg Baireuth had quite split. An inroad, early in December, of some four hundred Saxon deserters, passing secretly by Culmbach over the frontier to Eger in Bohemia, was alarming Bamberg, and the Margravine wrote to the King, begging him

to send some hussars to guard that side, but to do no damage in Anspach or Bamberg, as the Bishop was on his side. Through Braun's adjutant, whom she had seen, the Margravine learnt details of the battle of Lowositz, which she reported triumphantly to Frederic. It appeared that the Austrian general did not expect to see the King come from the neck below the Lobosch and Homolka Hills, and still less did he expect Frederic's order of battle, which rendered half Braun's artillery useless. Had the Prussian guns been aimed higher, all would have been lost. Any praise of her brother is always unction to Wilhelmina's soul, but sitting cooped up in the dreary Erlangen Castle that rough, wild winter weather, how she longed for the war to cease, and that Apollo might succeed Mars as the prevailing deity of her life and Frederic's.

Christmas, spent at Erlangen, brought, as usual, a letter from Frederic. He was up to his ears in work and plans, and scribbled, spelling atrociously. Very grateful was he for all Wilhelmina's news, which he would make use of as far as possible without betraying her. He inquired after Monsieur Vatan. Was he still at Baireuth, or where was he? Someone wished to write to him without any fear of the letter going astray. He wrote that, like Wilhelmina, he regretted the death of the estimable Antichrist (who lived another twenty years!).

On the last day of this eventful year the Margravine was cheered by no less than four letters simultaneously from her brother. Hasse, the musician, came too, from Dresden. The King was combining, as usual, whenever possible, music and literature with the sterner labours of war; and Hasse was now sent by him to cheer Wilhelmina. A whiff this of the old musical days, and almost the last! Delighted was the Margravine to hear Hasse say that he was so much pleased with the King's flute playing, and that Götzel did not play as well.

Chevalier Vatan's presence at Baireuth at this juncture was important and intentional. To Frederic it was vital to sunder Austria and France. The other two Mænaides gave him enough to do, and he was paying dearly for his proud contempt of the Pompadour. Wilhelmina, in gratitude for Frederic's removal of her enemy years before, now attempted to relieve him of his. The ostensible neutrality of Baireuth was a foregone secret partisanship of Prussia, and therefore more useful to Frederic than an open alliance. Even in the time of the mobilisation, the Margravine had forwarded secretly from the King to General Keith and another Prussian officer at the baths at Carlsbad their letters of recall. She now filled the post of secret agent and spy to Frederic as regarded the Empire, and the Margrave winked at the presence of a Prussian recruiting and intelligence officer in Baireuth! But when we consider their proximity to dangerous neighbours, we see that both the Margrave and his wife played a ticklish game.

On New Year's Eve the Margravine found herself rather in a quandary. From Witmann she could learn no news, but had discovered that all letters were opened at Vienna, which was full of intrigues, changing from day to day, and chopping generals while crossing the ford. Prince Charles was now to take command, and, with Piccolomini, to reorganise the Austrian army. Witmann was jealous of Folard, the Frenchman, and pretended to be ill in order not to return to Nuremberg, and leave Folard at Baireuth. This shows how much Austria and the Empire dreaded Wilhelmina's power and influence. But the worst was that Chevalier Vatan had fallen dangerously ill. He became delirious, and in his delirium abused Austria and the Jesuits in a way which made the Margravine tremble. Secretly a friend with him gave her a letter and memorandum to send to the King. But, owing to Vatan's illness, all communication was now difficult. The merchant through whom letters passed had gone,

and left no address, and the Margravine could not deliver the letter the King sent.

The last few days of the year Wilhelmina had also been ill. But Frederic's letters had done her more good than medicine. Adoringly she writes that he is more versatile than Alexander or Caesar; he plays at concerts, makes odes; the Empress may well burst with jealousy, and all nations seem to like him. Such is Wilhelmina's eulogy at the close of the eventful year of 1756.

CHAPTER II

IN AN EDDY OF THE STORM

Politics in the Franconian Circle.—The death of the French Agent. Anspach goes over to the enemy.—The Diet's fulminations.—How Wilhelmina acted as intelligence officer to Frederic.—A last attempt to reconcile Duchess Frederica to her husband.—The Margravine ill again.—The mighty storm brewing against Prussia.—The victory of Prague.—The Margravine in the whirl of war.—A delicate question.—The French Army approaches.—The gathering of the clans.

VOLTAIRE had turned his attention from poetry to history. His *Essai sur l'Histoire Générale* had been published at the end of 1756, and in January he sent the Margravine a copy, enclosing one for the "great man." *Frère Voltaire* begged for *Sœur Guillemette's* favour with Frederic. Were the latter at Berlin, Voltaire would take the liberty of asking for melon seeds from the Potsdam hot-houses for his new garden at Maurion, "but he (Frederic) has something else to do besides honouring my kitchen garden with melon seeds."

And so, indeed, had Wilhelmina! The Austrian troops from the Netherlands had crossed the Rhine in three columns, and six divisions had entered her Circle. An undisciplined host, and badly led, they marched, firing the villages and levying contributions, besides paying for nothing. The rumour ran that they would take up winter quarters in the recalcitrant Circle, in which case,

as the Margravine wrote to the King, giving full details about them, bankruptcy stared Baireuth in the face. She added tactical suggestions. If they passed beyond the Circle, if the Hussars attacked them in detail—and the harassed, tired columns were shoeless and ragged, marching four miles apart—the Prussian cavalry ought to be able to give a good account of them. Truly the Margravine was proving the *grande capitaine* she had laughingly dubbed herself a few years back!

With the New Year came changes in the French ministry. "*La belle Babet*," as Voltaire called the Pompadour favourite, the Abbé Bernis, was in the ascendant. Marshal Belleisle became War Minister. To the Margravine this change looked more hopeful. Belleisle, she wrote to the King, was entirely devoted to him, and much more powerful now that he had made his peace with the mistress.

The amusing Chevalier had succumbed to his illness. An abscess in the brain, the result of a blow, had cut short the brilliant future the Margravine predicted, and had deprived her of an agent of France. Vatan had in his possession important papers belonging to the King. The Margravine's first care was to secure them instantly on his death, and to dispatch them to her brother by a safe hand. Then, nothing daunted by Vatan's death, and intent on her peace-making projects, she suggested diffidently, indeed, to Frederic, that Folard, who came and went in the Circle, would be a safe and secret channel, did the King wish to make any advances to France. For the fidelity of Folard, brought up by Belleisle, the Margravine made herself responsible. Frederic sent compliments to Folard, but declined, at present, to make use of him.

The affairs of the Circle were not hopeful. Witman had returned triumphant from Anspach, which had gone over, root and branch, to Austria. But the Margrave of Baireuth, in spite of Witmann's persuasions to follow the example of his cousin, stood his ground, determined,

writes his wife to the King, to live and die faithful to his house. Bamberg was still with them.

In the middle of January Wilhelmina was able to send Frederic the enemy's plan of campaign, writing from her bed, in lulls of pain. There were discussions between the Austrian and French generals. While Braun was pining to recover Silesia, the Maréchal d'Estrées, in command of the Rhine army, was determined to retrieve Saxony, and only to leave a single corps to keep Schwerin in check on the Silesian road. D'Estrées was not quite trusted in Vienna, and, in his scheme, the Margravine saw a sign of the French wishing to conciliate Frederic. She added that she hoped shortly to send him a suggestion by which he could pounce on the five thousand troops of Mayence and of her hated Würzburg, and she enclosed Voltaire's last letter and his new history. His style she thought changed, but felt sure that Voltaire, at least, convinced that the King would continue to yield the finest examples of modern history, was anxious to make friends with Frederic, whoever else made war on him.

By the middle of January the Diet had got ready its machinery against Frederic. There was to be an arming in triplicate, the paying up of the "Roman Months" (emergency contributions to the Empire), a mobilising of the Circle's military levies. With all possible speed the Army of the Empire was to take the field, *eilend* (hastening). The hurrying printers wrote it *elend* (wretched) by mistake, and a miserable horde it was, indeed. Wilhelmina's heart sank. There were bad times coming for Baireuth. Yet, she wrote to Frederic, she hears through the ever-nameless spy that, if he will but make such terms as the spy will suggest with the Council of the Franconian Circle, as will disunite the Princes and form a party to counterbalance France and Austria, the blow may still be warded off. Anspach was trying to reduce Bamberg, as the latter wrote to the Margrave

of Baireuth, who did his utmost to prevent it. But the bad example of Anspach might be contagious, and the Margravine writes to the King that he had better try what a little threatening can do with his troublesome brother in-law, who, she hears, has signed all that Witmann and Seckendorff asked for.

With her own Margrave's assurances of esteem and loyalty, Wilhelmina sent Frederic as a birthday present a little table for Sans Souci, and a picture by Koposchki, a Nuremberg artist. She stole it out of the Margrave's collection, as the latter bought all the artist's pictures at his death, considering him a mixture of the style of Guerchini and Annabel Caraveggio.

Still confined to the house, on January 24th the Margravine wrote the King a birthday letter, happy at the beginning, thankful that he has been spared her. But politically she was depressed. The Margrave's Imperial Regiment had passed through Baireuth, and also the Linden Dragoons, all very fine men; the Margravine writes that, being unable to excommunicate them, her curses has pursued them, so spiteful has she become! Witmann was back again, all gilded with Austrian bribes. Bamberg, after all, had followed Anspach's lead, and to the Margrave of Baireuth the screw had been applied. Folard was expected back shortly. The Margravine received instructions from the King about dealing with him—Frederic's second bid to France through his sister. But, in the meantime, the outlook with France was not so hopeful. Louis was working to form leagues among the Princes of the Empire, not for their own advantage, but that he might secure votes in the Diet. Backed by France, Austria had wrung out of that assemblage the title of Defender of the Treaty of Westphalia, which stirred all Europe to action.

To her birthday letter, Loyal Wilhelmina had added a little plea for Voltaire. She had heard that he was living at Geneva like a little king, lavishing money,

and that, though his body was shrivelling up, his mind was the same as ever.

Very pathetic is Frederic's reply. Unaffected by the clamour of his enemies, by their plots and their treacheries, he is awaiting the spring, when Fortune will decide all. But then comes a cry from the very depths of his soul, as he thanks Wilhelmina for the picture. "God knows when I shall have the happiness of showing you where it is hung, and of thanking you myself!"

Wilhelmina, sitting at Erlangen, her feelers out in the direction of Vienna and Paris, reported to Frederic in February news from England, through a certain Mesagne who was with her, with an experience of fourteen years of that country. England cannot go on with the war, she wrote, or she will be bankrupt; the Duke of Cumberland is the cause of the war, and Pitt, now in office again, will not support him, but will pursue a different course to his predecessor. Unfortunately, less than six months saw Pitt out of office, and the Duke of Cumberland advancing headlong to the perdition of Hastenbrock! Rumour said that the Empress was buying from the Emperor the command of the army for her brother-in-law, and that great preparations were going on in the Prague arsenal. In France, the Pompadour still kept her post, but the Prince of Conti and D'Argensson's influence outbalanced hers, and they disapproved of the alliance with Vienna, and were both more in favour of Prussia. Under seal of confession the Margravine gleaned that the Prince of Deuxponts is trying at Paris to break off the marriage of the Archduchess with the Prince of Bavaria, a sign that France was sulky with Vienna, and desired a *rapprochement* with Frederic.

Queen Sophia Dorothea, now advanced in years, had felt the severe winter and the strain of the war. Wilhelmina heard that she had been ill with a bad cough, and that Monbijou did not suit her. Indeed, one

can well imagine it an undesirable winter residence for an old lady! The King, before the campaign opened in the spring, ran up to see his mother and to bid her what was a last farewell. Any journey of the Margravine's to Berlin was out of the question, on account, not only of her own health, but of the difficulties of passing through a country now occupied by the enemy's troops.

In the middle of the month the Margravine was able to send the King a batch of secret news from Vienna. There was still the disagreement over the command of the Army. Nothing was yet decided, though Prince Charles had been well received by the Emperor and Kaunitz. To save the former's face, Braun was to send in his resignation, if obliged to serve under the Prince, and the Emperor declined to find the money unless his brother commanded. Somehow or other, money would have to be levied in Austria; probably the convents would be made to disgorge. The French subsidised troops, she writes, were ordered to march by the middle of March for Bohemia, but nothing was ready.

The Margravine enclosed Voltaire's last letter and mentioned the melon seed request, saying she had lost the *P.S.* about it. It was not found till a century later among her own batch of letters to and from Voltaire, which only came to light so unexpectedly in recent times. Again, she put in a word for the recluse of the Leman. Her instinct told her that this was no time for Frederic to neglect any help from anyone in the French direction, and she longed for him to make his peace with Voltaire. D'Adhémar had been at Geneva, *en route* for Italy, and reported that the Sage was no longer the same man. His temper had softened, and he spoke of the King in the most affectionate manner. Leave had been given him to return to France.

Nearer home things were looking blacker. The Margrave of Anspach, accompanied by his evil genius, Seckendorff, and by Witmann, working hard as ever,

had gone to Stuttgart. Wilhelmina lost no time in informing Frederic of the fact. She felt sure that the object of this journey was to seduce the Duke. The Austrian Envoy was omnipotent in Anspach, and the Margravine satirically writes that she thinks only the Prussians can have escaped the effects of the earthquake of the year before, which seems to have turned everybody's heads. But for the present the mission was unsuccessful, and Charles Eugene was loyal to his old guardian.

To this guardian the Margravine now had recourse to try for the last time to patch up a reconciliation between his niece, the Duchess, and her husband. But she appealed in vain, though she hoped, doubtless, that, as political motives had induced Frederic to make the unlucky match, political considerations might induce him to try and rivet again the link which bound Würtemberg to him. Frederic, however, had all along been more clear-sighted as to the Duke's character than his sister, and quite declined to speak plainly to him. He saw it would be useless, and he only, as before, preached patience and toleration to Frederica, though he did not defend the Duke's conduct, writing that he merited the fate of Actæon. To Wilhelmina, over her daughter's fate, was to be vouchsafed no alleviation.

The early spring found the Margravine ill again, with a burnt hand, which must have been a great trial. *Frère Voltaire* wrote sympathetically that "he might be allowed to make a thousand prayers for her health; Nature had given her everything else. But what was the use of beauty, greatness, wit and charm, if the body was ill?" *Frère Voltaire* had been tempted by an offer to go to Petersburg, and would her Royal Highness protect him? He wrote that he had said to himself that he would "go by Baireuth to throw myself at the feet of my protectress; the King her brother would give me passports, which I shall owe to the protection of his benevolent sister." But

the cold wind, the Hussars who beset the route, put him off; he remained to act in theatricals at Lausanne, and suggested a charming, well-born actress,

"who would be more suitable to the Court of Baireuth than that of Geneva. But one cannot talk of amusements when everything is in preparation for real and grave war. The Court at Versailles has just made eight Marshals of France, and 50,000 men are actually off to Flanders. . . The King, your brother, will be driven to doing even greater things than he has done yet. Afterwards he will return to the philosophy for which he was born as much as for heroism, and he will remember a man who left his country for him."

The Margravine, better informed, wrote to the King that the French numbered 100,000, and were going *viâ* Westphalia to Hanover, and that Folard and the Circle were in despair. As to the Circle troops, now really afoot to the number of some 40,000, she would tell him when they started, that he might crush them ere they got to Bohemia. The Diet had done its worst for Frederic.

Four invasions were launched at him from four points of the compass. The Russians were preparing to threaten Prussia, the Austrians Silesia, the French Westphalia, which Frederic could not possibly hold, and last and least Sweden, suborned by French gold, had concluded an alliance against him, and was threatening his Baltic shores. But, in April, the King suddenly hurled himself on the most dangerous, the Austrians, massing at Prague, in four columns. On the 27th, delighted Wilhelmina sent enthusiastic congratulations on the Duke of Bevern's victory over Königseck at Reichenberg, which had driven all the Austrian columns under the shelter of the Prague. Ardently she longed to get him news of the effects of the victory; but her spy would not be back at Erlangen for a fortnight. She determined to do her best, however; the loyal sister longed to disguise herself as an Amazon, and see for herself! But her health was again bad, and she was anxious, too, about the Queen Mother. To go and see

her impossible, so she sent a courier, but wrote to Frederic that she feared their mother would not be with them long. The anxiety of war was slowly breaking Sophia Dorothea's indomitable heart. The Margravine was doing the most to hinder the mobilisation of the Circle army. There was a new Bishop of Bamberg, as well-intentioned as his predecessor had been vacillating, and who would help secretly.

We have three excited and joyful letters on the great victory of Prague. They show all that she was to Frederic, and that he was all in all to her. Four days after the battle she writes, not knowing where to address, that she hears that Prague and the Austrian army are bottled up and fasting in a most devout manner, which she only hopes may speedily conduce to their eternal welfare! In her delight over the good news she builds castles in the air, which she fondly hopes may now become realised. Four days later she writes again, joying over Braun's defeat, and hoping so ardently for the fall of Prague and Eger. "The strength of your Army, the happiness of your country, and of our whole family depends on you alone." It would have been but pardonable in the Baireuth Princess if she had written "my country," but, with this exception, one cannot accuse her of ever forgetting her native land. It is characteristic of her, however, that in the moment of great excitement, only Frederic's personal relation to the great stakes at issue strikes her. Her brother alone absorbs her thoughts.

But the victory of Prague did not relieve, but rather intensified, the tension in the Circle. Rumour said that the French were going to encamp in the Circle to make the Empire help the Austrians. There was a great crisis. All the States of the Circle, except Baireuth, were sending their contingents. Witmann had made yet another appeal to the Margrave. But his wife writes to Frederic that he was standing firm, and that nothing but force would make him bear arms

against Prussia. Well indeed might she beg from the King, a little later, a few words of thanks for her husband.

On May 10th she wrote that she heard the French would certainly march; that the Emperor would make the free city of Frankfürt a fortress. She regretted the wrong-headedness of the Princes of the Empire, who did not see that they were but the tools of Austrian ambition, and that Frederic would be their true deliverer. She was beginning, she said, to distrust Folard, who would soon be returning to Baireuth, when she would unmask him. Fervently she longed that Frederic's troops, his Free Corps Column, would come into these parts, but she feared there might be some difficulty in feeding them, as the French had laid hands on all they could get on this side of the Rhine. So there would be little for the Prussians to get out of the Empire. Then she blames herself for interfering at all, even by suggestion, in matters which Frederic must have already foreseen and arranged, and goes on to express her wrath at the behaviour of the Circle, and, begging for an address, risks the letter through to Dresden by a *chasseur*, as it must go.

Wilhelmina, knocked up, as usual, by the heat, and very ill, was cheered by Frederic's letters, and felt inclined to frame in gold the one announcing the Prague victory and treasure it. She saw a letter from Vienna which said that Kaunitz was in haste to settle the difference between Braun and Prince Charles, which led to the defeat of Prague, when the news of the disaster reached him from Daun. But the Austrian courage was unabated. The Empress kept up to inspire confidence, and the Council of War resolved to fight to the bitter end. She also saw a very mendacious account of the battle, which gave the loss of the Prussians at 20,000, and said that Prague was provisioned for three months! Reports to Baireuth said that consternation reigned in Vienna.

On May 20th Wilhelmina wrote that it was rumoured that the bombardment of Prague had begun that very day. Would she were there! The French she heard were giving dissatisfaction, as they threatened to annex Frankfürt and Mayence. She added a hint of the possibility of peace after this victory. Folard was at Nuremberg, but he would not make the first offer, as France would then lose her allies. How glorious if Frederic would take the first step! But Frederic, who never seems to have had the same confidence in Folard as his sister, besides thinking him a fool as an author, was of opinion that the Frenchman was only scheming to induce the King to make the first proposals of peace, either to Paris or Vienna, that he might disclose them and lead to a rupture between England and Prussia. Then, as so often when the first excitement of joy is over, Wilhelmina's spirits sank. There followed a dateless little hurried letter of nine lines. It is almost impossible for her to write, she says, for such sinister rumours reach her about Frederic himself. She has been on the verge of suicide. A *P.S.* informs him of the march of the Russians, and that the commander, Prince Apraxin, is too fat to ride, and has to be carried. A second *P.S.* suggests to him to cut off the Stuttgart troops, which, forced to start to the number of some 3,600 on the 18th, have secured a promise that they shall not fight against Prussia, but only garrison Vienna, or otherwise the privates would have mutinied.

When Frederic entered Bohemia he took, at the same time, measures to wreak vengeance on Anspach and the other States of the Franconian and Upper Palatinate Circles. He detached Colonel Mayer, who darted on them with a flying column of two Free Corps—about 1,500 men—five guns, and very little baggage. Though the Margravate of Baireuth was safe from Mayer's onslaught, yet his operations came perilously near Wilhelmina, and for a few weeks in June and July her letters show her a prey to "wars, incur-

sions, and alarms." She writes every few days as the crisis increases.

From the first of June Mayer whirled about at Fürth, Nuremberg, and near the Erlangen frontier, levying quarters and supplies, and gratuities in gold and new uniforms. Ten thousand Bamberg peasants, incited by their priests, prepared to resist him. They attacked the Margrave of Baireuth's valet on his way to Erlangen with orders, and almost bayonetted him to death. The Duchess of Würtemberg's chamberlain, *en route* to Stuttgart, nearly shared the same fate, and only escaped by saying he was a Prussian. The Margrave of Baireuth was threatened with death if he set foot beyond his own frontier. The Margrave of Anspach, wrote his sister-in-law, was detained at Würzburg, in prison, so to speak, lest he should change sides again, being entirely in the power of his Council and Austria. The Bishop of Würzburg was virulent against Frederic, but the Free City of Nüremberg had hoped to declare itself neutral, had the Prussian troops been able to succour it.

Though Mayer, to the admiration of everyone, was carrying on this guerilla warfare with a considerate humanity worthy of his master, and though "the adjacent Baireuth lands were to the utmost spared all billeting, and even transit, one sergeant with the Würzburg *Herr Commissarius* and eight common men" were picked up on Baireuth ground, as also a Colonel von Reitzenstein, one of the many of that ilk, an Anspach official and Seckendorff's tool. Here began a pretty coil. Appealing for protection to the Margrave, he was clapped into Plassenburg, the Baireuth fortress-prison at Culmbach, and the King wrote strict injunctions to the Margrave that he was to keep him tight, and there he lay, despite the uproar over his detention, for the present. In the meantime it shows how clear-headed and cool the Margravine was in this excitement, that she found time and means to send

Frederic a copy of the dying deposition of Louis XV.'s would-be murderer, which she had secretly obtained through her French agents, and which was important as showing that he was not the tool of the Jesuits as Voltaire imagined, but that the plot must be laid at another door.

Mayer had been so severe with Bamberg (which deserved it) that he was attacked by the peasants, reinforced by the Circle Militia, at Vach. But, "having taken up an unassailable position on the Regnitz river" and burnt the bridges, he cannonaded the rabble host, killing twenty-four, and capturing and hanging the Burgermeister and six peasants. The Margravine, in a letter to Frederic, describes how Mayer was surrounded by the mob, on whom he fired his cannon, and they fled. The priests, bearing aloft an image of the Virgin, tried in vain to rally them. The enemy retired on Fürth, 20,000 men were sent to help the peasants, and the passes seized. Mayer, thus blocked at both ends, was obliged, in spite of Frederic's strict injunctions, to enter Baireuth territory, and he encamped at Culmbach under the cover of the fortress of Plassenburg, on guard over Reitzenstein. Ten of his men stopped the enemy at the bridge of Culmbach, and helped the few cavalry he had, which the Bamberg mob had put to flight. Then Mayer started to pursue, and the rest would have come over the frontier. The Margrave did all he could to help Mayer, and the latter withdrew in the night from Baireuth territory, and the news of the approach of General Oldenberg, another general whom Frederic had dispatched to the Mayence country on a similar errand to Mayer's, drew off the mob.

When all his exploits in her regions were over, the Margravine bestowed upon the "bright little black-eyed, brisk little man"—"brilliant, airy kind of fellow"—"had much of the chevalier, as well as of the partisan when requisite" about him—her Baireuth Order of Sincerity and Fidelity.

The Margravine informed the King of the movements of the Imperial Army; that the Würtemberg contingent start at once and go by water from Ulm to Vienna; that in ten days the Swabian troops will be at Fürth, and those of the Upper Rhine a few days later. She suggested to Frederic to send a strong reinforcement and beat them in detail, otherwise they may advance into Saxony or Bohemia, and worry him if the siege of Prague still lasted. She thought that the 40,000 French she heard of could not arrive in time to spoil that, and was of opinion, from her information, that the design of France was to enfeeble the German Empire by means of themselves, and then to return to peace and the old alliance with Prussia. In her view France had been ill-advised to fight him on account of five small towns in the Netherlands. Were all Europe offered him now, it would not recompense him, and she ends with jokes about the siege of Prague, and the Lucullian feasting of the Princes in the besieged city.

It shows the terrible strait in which Baireuth lay, and the excited feelings of the Margravine, that, on the very same day, she wrote again, warning Frederic that the conduct of the Elector of Bavaria was suspicious. He was promising Frederic neutrality, and yet was mobilising. Rumour had it that 40,000 French were coming into the Empire under Mirepoix. The Imperial troops from Swabia and the Upper Rhine were on the march, their object Bohemia. Würtemberg had been delaying, but would now join them. As to the war on their own borders, Mayer, she went on to say, lost more than at first was given out. The army at Fürth was making havoc in Baireuth territory. They seized Metel, a servant, sent by the Margrave on errands near Erlangen, and threatened to burn the villages. The Margrave was temporising, but, if he was pressed, he would defend himself. The Protestants were hated, and, if it went on, it would become a religious war.

She added that when Folard was last at Erlangen with them, he let fall some words with reference to Frederic's making a separate peace with Maria Theresa, who would join with the Empire and him against France, and, in exchange, demand the cession of Silesia. France was in dread of such a peace, and Wilhelmina diplomatically tried to foment this fear in order that they might lower their tone to the King.

With reference to Reitzenstein, the bone of contention, Wilhelmina sent the King a long German rigmarole from the Margrave—who was grateful to Frederic for backing him up—exculpating himself with his "odious neighbours." He was sending the paper round to them, and begged for the King's reply to show to the Princes at the Circle Diet.

The disorder and confusion in the Circle, caused by Mayer's inroad, was great. No one could pass the Baireuth frontier except at the risk of their lives, wrote the Margravine, and at any moment her villages might be burned. The Bishop had promised satisfaction to the Margrave, but excesses continued. The Margrave was hated, and threatened with death. He was temporising, complaining of the violation of his territory, and demanding satisfaction. The States of the Circle were in the wrong, and with Frederic's help could be made to pay for their foolish conduct towards him. The Margravine found three Prussian prisoners, two from the Hussar regiment of Vienna, and one of the Margrave's regiment. They had escaped from the camp at Presburg, and returned to the corps of Mayer, and one, who was wounded in the throat, she was busy nursing. They had seen no troops in all Hungary.

She adds that the Würtemberg Ministry was behaving well, and delaying the march of their contingent, and that only 2,000 Mayence men had come to the assistance of Würzburg. But she felt sure that the Bishops would come over to neutrality directly Prague was taken. That is the longed-for consummation. Rumours

reached her that the Prince of Bavaria had beaten Daun, but she was full of fear and dread for her brother—could she only share his danger! Thus she ended a long letter she called a lamentation.

On June 26th Wilhelmina sent off a hurried note to say that there was mutiny among the 3,600 excellent troops which were already at Stuttgart, having been subsidised by France. They declined to fight against Frederic, and there were desertions and executions. She suggested to him to send a disguised officer to lead them, and was sure he would make a rich haul. As the Duke could not order his men to serve in a foreign land, this was no rebellion. She had been treating with Folard again. He was at Münich and could do anything, she wrote, suggesting that Voltaire was bribing him. She heard the Duke of Richelieu was to command the French Army, but hopefully added that they would come at the end of the campaign. The Prince of Hildburghausen, who was to command the Empire Army, had not yet left Vienna. The capture of Prague would alter everything. Wilhelmina longed for it impatiently, and hoped for a bloodless capture!!

This letter was sent by a courier to the camp at Prague. It missed Frederic, who was fighting at Kollin!

CHAPTER III

BLOW UPON BLOW

The crash of Kollin.—Frederic turns to Wilhelmina for help.—Peril to Baireuth.—How Frederic averted it.—The Margravine's third attempt at peacemaking. The death of Sophia Dorothea.—Baireuth stands for the King.

The 1st July brought Wilhelmina a letter from Frederic at Nimburg, the first news of the disaster at Kollin, and the raising of the siege of Prague, written three days after the defeat. Grasping at the much, he had lost all. He tried to keep his hold on Prague and to repulse at the same time Daun advancing to its relief. Mannstein blundered, and Frederic himself lost his head, and, at a critical moment, gave indefinite orders to Moritz von Dessau ; the result was disaster But very gently he broke the news to Wilhelmina, smoothing it over. Doubtless one of his first thoughts, as he sat after the battle under the tree at Nimburg, dazed, and drawing figures in the sand with his stick, while his broken remnant of Lifeguards assembled round him, was for the frail invalid at the Ermitage, and of the effect the news would have on her. He has had no letter from Wilhelmina, and could not at this moment send any help into the Empire.

The Margravine's reply was instant, but short ; a very broken letter. Her first impulse was to get news of Frederic, to re-establish communication. At last she

has got a letter! She begs for a trusted messenger to be sent to Plassen to fetch letters from her, and hopes that her valet has got through with hers to the King. She writes that she is depressed and broken down by the reverses, but cheered by the letter.

Then Frederic, unsolicited, but sure of her help and sympathy, turned to her as he had once before turned at a crisis in his life, turned at a now far greater one. He wrote from Leitmeritz a week after the disaster.

"After the misfortune which occurred on the 18th, no resource is left to me but to try and make peace by means of France. I implore you to tell Folard that you are sure I am bent on it, that one will willingly give oneself up to the arbitration of France, that one hopes that she will at least keep a shred of friendship for her old allies, that one only asked to know what she would require of me, that I was not in a state of desperation, but that for the welfare of Germany and to avoid a greater effusion of human blood, you were sure that one would agree easily to the conditions, that you beg them to give you a prompt reply."

And he added that a few words from Wilhelmina to her old acquaintance, Belleisle, would probably have a good effect.

Another letter followed, three days later:

"The upset which the unlucky day of the 18th has made in my affairs has obliged me to raise the siege of Prague and to put one of my armies at Nimburg, whence I have just returned, and the other here. Your courier has not reached me yet. If you can prepare the mind of the French to explain to you the conditions of peace, that one can judge of their intentions and see if one could do anything with them; if you would beg them to confide their demands to you, promising not to make any bad use of it, and replying to them of the good mind I was in, perhaps one could see if this treaty which one supposes them to have made with the Austrians is real, or, at least, one could judge by their proposals as to what one could expect of them in case of need. If peace came to me from your hands, it would be doubly sweet to me, and you would have the honour of having pacified Germany. . . Our affairs are not desperate, but upset. In three weeks' time I hope to come to the surface again."

Three days later he hastens to reassure her as regards

himself, knowing how she would be feeling. It is a personal letter about himself entirely.

"You have nothing to fear for me; men are always in the hands of what is called fate. Many people meet with accidents out walking, in their rooms, in their beds; many escape the perils of war; those dangers are less for a general who commands an army than for other officers. I shall have work which I do not dread. I shall have to endure fatigues, but the doctors say that exercise is healthy. Everything will turn out as Heaven pleases."

He begs her to send her letters round by Hesse for safety, and he is thinking of having some private agent at Gera, who can send him packages in great emergencies.

"Germany is now in a terrible crisis. I am alone obliged to defend its liberties, its privileges and its religion; and if I fall, for the time it is all up."

Wilhelmina lost not a moment in forwarding Frederic's behests. She replies only ten days after the date of his letter that she has sent a courier to Folard at Münich with a letter to Marshal Belleisle, the War Minister, and enclosed Folard's reply. But, though anxious to make peace, Folard said Belleisle's star had sunk. Through the winter the Margravine, however, had been corresponding with Mesagne in France, by means of the Comte de Mirabeau. It now struck her that perhaps she could send the letter to Paris to begin in her own name negotiations with the Pompadour, Mirabeau being a relation of the Abbé Bernis, her favourite, and cousin of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. She thought that the Pompadour, now the head and front of the opposition and hatred to the Prussian King, could be bribed. The stories which Frederic had told about the favourite and the King had been repeated to her and had made mischief. Wilhelmina was not aware if the same proposals France was willing to make last winter held good, namely, that Frederic was to keep all his possessions. The compensation for Saxony, she thought, was more

difficult. As to the Vienna Treaty, she had never yet been able to learn anything about it. She supposed, however, that France would want the expenses of the war and the five towns. When the Paris courier returns Folard will certainly have to come to Baireuth, she writes, and she hopes her letter thither will stop Maréchal d'Estrées, and the march of the Imperial troops.

Wilhelmina concluded by asking for orders. She trusts that, if that base woman (the Pompadour) is won over, Frederic could obtain advantageous conditions. This business she will conduct herself, and if it is unsuccessful, she will bear the blame. She asks Frederic to address all letters to the valet, Lebrasser; Mermann is growing old and forgets. She begs a person in disguise may come to the same servant and receive letters; she likes to change her agent continually.

She adds the piece of information that the Austrian Army was surrounded by the garrisons of Brünn, Olmütz, and Eger; and that three days ago she heard that the latter place was only held by invalids. Her son-in-law, the Duke, who had fought against Frederic at Kollin, was back again in his capital. She adds further details of the Austrian losses, and a little salve to the brother's wounded pride by mentioning that the enemy were not over-elated, considering their victory won by superiority of numbers only over the greatest captain that ever existed!

Then, and only then, did unselfish Wilhelmina write of news nearer home. The Emperor was sending troops to suppress any possible rising in Nuremberg in favour of Prussia. But there was worse to come. Unless Reitzenstein was set free, two thousand Austrian Hussars were to ravage Baireuth, and to pass on to Westphalia or Saxony. But there was hope that this letter might reach Frederic in time to enable him to cut them off on their way up from Hungary. They were to come in to Baireuth on the Eger side, she adds

in a postscript. This news had been sent to the Margrave by the Prince of Hildburghausen, threatening in the name of the Emperor, and Wilhelmina was terribly frightened lest her courier should not get through with it to the King. But she tried to conclude hopefully all would yet go well; and she was busy working for his deserters, his prisoners, and recruits.

The peril to Baireuth over the Reitzenstein business was indeed great, for parties were so divided in the Franconian and Swabian Circles. The Prince of Hildburghausen, Commander-in-chief of the "miserable Empire Army," secretly warned the Margrave that an attempt would be made by the Austrian Hussars to release the prisoner. It was impossible for the Margrave to maintain his position. He himself wrote to the King about the Reitzenstein emergency, asking for permission to release the prisoner. Frederic did not hesitate for a moment to sacrifice his own interests where Wilhelmina's peace and safety were concerned.

"My dearest sister," he wrote, "*Rendez Reitzenstein à la garde de Dieu!* I should be in despair if his detention drew down troubles upon you. We must, my dear sister, bend to the storm. Yield to the superior force and preserve for me your love and your health. This is all I ask. I have written in the same sense to the Margrave, and I beg you both to think of the safety of your country."

On the back of the Margrave's letter he scribbled, in his own handwriting: "Under these circumstances, for God's sake, set Reitzenstein free, and not draw down any furies on his head." A few days later he wrote to the Margravine even more strongly:

"I have already replied about the affair of Reitzenstein. I advise the Margrave to surrender him first, in order not to be implicated in an affair of which the consequences might be fatal to him."

The Margrave was indeed in a cleft stick, and could hardly wait for the King's reply. For we find later Wilhelmina apologising to her brother for Reitzenstein's release: the pressure of the Circle, in order to ward

the dreaded inroad into their borders, was great, and the Margrave had to yield, and let the prisoner go on parole.

But there followed no recriminations on Frederic's part for the Margrave's Austrian proclivities, as in the Silesian War. Wilhelmina's health and happiness were now of more value to him than any political gains. It had been touch and go, but the horrors of war were warded off Baireuth soil.

The King was only too thankful to accept his sister's ministration.

"As you, my dear sister, wish to take upon yourself the great work of peace, I beg you to be kind enough to send M. de Mirabeau to France. I will willingly bear the expenses; he may offer as much as 500,000 crowns (£75,000) to the favourite for peace, and he may even advance his offers beyond that, if, at the same time, one could persuade her to give us some concessions. You feel all the delicacy I require in this affair, and how little I can appear in it; the least hint of it to England and all is lost. I think your emissary may as well address himself to his relation, who is now minister, and whose influence increases day by day. In short, I rely on you. To whom could I better confide the interests of a country, which it is my duty to make happy, than to a sister whom I adore, and who, though much cleverer, is my *alter ego*."

It must have been a proud and happy moment to Wilhelmina when she read Frederic's letter, appointing her his go-between; probably one of the proudest in her life. Her own four crowns, indeed, had vanished into limbo, but now she was mediating between two others, and one of them was her "*alter ego*."

This was the third attempt that Wilhelmina had made within seven months to gain the ear of France, and to sound it for peace. Through Vatan in the winter, through Folard in May and June, and now through Mirabeau. The latter was personally devoted to her, a kindred spirit as regarded art, and, moreover, he possessed the great advantage of being related to the all-powerful Abbé. In less than a month he had started for Paris with money and instructions from Frederic himself to try his luck.

But to the power of the Pompadour was now added that of the Dauphine, burning to revenge her father, the King of Poland. A second army, called by her name, was on the way from France to join D'Estrées, and combine with the Army of the Circles of the Empire, already drilling at Erfürt and, in spite of the efforts and the firm attitude of the Margrave, augmenting all round.

The latter did his best, but his efforts were clumsy compared with his wife's. She was a better politician now than she was in her domestic war. To Folard she only gave her confidence so far that he could not tell her secrets to the Circle and the Empire. Mirabeau she attached to herself by personal magnetism and his fidelity. As a man, Wilhelmina would have been a good diplomatist. As it was, she showed herself as no unworthy agent for Frederic. Her little feminine wiles came in handy.

The same day that Frederic wrote from Leitmeritz, suggesting a proffering of peace, a letter was penned to him by his sister Amelia at Berlin, announcing the death of their mother, who had wished him to be informed at once. Sophia Dorothea had lived to see the desire of her ambitious heart gratified, in one, at least, of her children, and that one her favourite. Then had come an eclipse, if not ruin, and it would seem as if the "proud Princess of Hanover" could not bear up against this revulsion of fate. Full of years, worn out with a stormy life which, though, upon the whole, successful and happy, had not been without its bitter disappointments and cruel sufferings, Sophia Dorothea sank on June 28th. Frederic felt her death acutely. For several days he withdrew into quiet, giving way to real grief, and writing to Amelia as any distressed son might write of his sorrow, but with a hope that perhaps Heaven had withdrawn his dear mother "that she might not see the misfortunes of our family." But to Wilhelmina, as to one versed

in the secrets of his life, and understanding him best, as soon as a courier could be procured to take the news, he wrote simply, "*Nous n'avons plus de mère!*" A new grief had overwhelmed them, that he "was obliged to act, had no time to give free vent to his tears," that all losses can be repaired except those of death, that he prays heaven to keep her, "without whom I should hardly have any friends left in the world."

The death of her mother did not affect Wilhelmina so deeply as it did Frederic. Years ago, by her harshness and her continual unkindness, Sophia Dorothea had quenched the love in the warm-hearted, impulsive daughter when a girl; in the mature woman, disciplined by suffering, she had, in a measure, rekindled it. To her brother Henry, Wilhelmina wrote with deep feeling. "How can I paint you my deep grief . . . my soul must be riveted into my body, for I am still living."

"Brother Voltaire, who will never cease in his devotion," wrote sympathisingly from "Aux Délices," and tried to comfort her by recalling old and happier days:

"Your Royal Highness has lost a mother, you see your brother constantly exposed to the greatest dangers, and war is raging on the borders of your country. Ah! Madame, how much more enjoyable were those days when you so admirably represented Roxane at your theatre, and I had the honour of personating the part of Acomat, when I appeared in a Chinese costume and was witness of the beautiful *fête* you gave your Royal brother. I was very happy then; I was daily near your Royal Highnesses, lost in admiration of your many talents, your charming ways, and listening to the sound of your voice. I do not know what will be the end of this cruel war, which paralyses Germany; but of this I am certain, that there is no one more worthy of devotion and more amiable than the Margravine of Baireuth. Friend and foe agree on this point; it is an article of faith which no one dares to attack.

I hear with pleasure that your health is improving, and that you have no reason to miss the climate of Provence and Italy. Baireuth must be a pleasant residence in spite of being so near the seat of war."

The deep black-edged letter we have of the Margravine to Frederic, acknowledging the receipt of his,

is rather filled with grief for his grief, though she, on her part, has suffered all that nature and affection can feel. It is for the living she mourns more than for the dead. The Austrians, she hears, are at Lissa; will they cut him off? Dare she hope that he will be able to maintain himself in Bohemia? The French have asked for passage for their "Dauphiness" army, 10,000 men, through Würtemberg. The Imperial troops of the Lower Rhine are in full march, those of Mainz will, in a few days, pass near Baireuth.

The approach of the army interfered with the Margravine's recruiting for Prussia, which she continued to do as best she might. She wrote to the King that money was short at Vienna, and that the two commanders, Daun and Prince Charles, quarrelled like cat and dog. Money was short at Baireuth too. Taking advantage of the Margrave's difficult position, debts a century old had been hunted up, and the Margravine feared the pack of creditors would soon begin to give tongue. Added to this, the Army of the Empire was collecting. Austria was putting on the screw again and, though the Margrave still held his ground, his wife wrote to the King that she feared the Baireuth contingent would have to march.

CHAPTER IV

IN THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

The screw is tightened on Baireuth.—The French advance.—Frederic's stubborn pride.—Bad news all round.—Prince William's fiasco.—The advancing flood.—Voltaire makes a suggestion.—The death of the *Wilder Margraf*.—The Margravine military.—Spying and spied on.—The Circle Army encamps at Fürth.—Its condition.—The Margravine suggests peace terms.—Frederic *in profundis*.—The sword pierces Wilhelmina's soul.—Voltaire the comforter.—The advance of the joint army.—The *Epître à ma Sœur*.—Frederic marches to Thuringia.—His dealings with Richelieu.—In the nethermost depths.—Wilhelmina to the rescue.—Her hopes of France.—The offer of the diamonds.—The *Epître* to D'Argens.—Wilhelmina's wish to join Frederic.—Richelieu's failure.—Voltaire sympathises and assists.—Wilhelmina's first military report.—Berlin in danger.—The madness of despair.—Voltaire takes a step for peace.—Frederic still stubborn.—To save Berlin.

After the mother's death the blows seemed to fall thick and fast. Frederic sat at Leitmeritz on guard, while the Prince of Prussia began his ill-starred retreat. The Russians had taken Memel. D'Estrées was advancing through Cleves against the English force under the Duke of Cumberland. All July the Army of the Circles of the Empire lay encamped at Fürth, drilling zealously. The Margravine's letters at this time, many in cypher, (she had received Frederic's "*books of enchantment*") are full of the gathering of the clans. Prince Hildburg-

hausen had taken command; the "Roman Months" were to be paid up, and the Emperor was demanding an oath of allegiance which the Protestant generals declined to give.

But the observation of the approaching storm did not prevent the Margravine from watching closely every sign from France, and of the advance of the "Dauphiness" army. Full of hope as to Mirabeau's mission, for which she begged Frederic to send the money he had offered, she noted both his desire for peace, and the joint counter-working of the Dauphiness and the Pompadour to avenge the King of Poland. If possible, the Margravine hoped to do without the mistress. Unlike Maria Theresa, her proud spirit recoiled, even in this stress, from truckling to the "base woman." It was only to be a last resource. But her tone was hopeful in the main, and she begged for written instructions for Mirabeau, to save time.

The Duke of Würtemberg was having trouble with his contingent, mostly Protestants, who declined to march, and he was acting hot-headedly. His mother-in-law suggested to her brother that a few disguised officers might win the rebels over to the King. The Emperor was growing very high-handed, and, to judge by the dissatisfaction and desertion in the "miserable" Army of the Empire—a mere conglomeration of disunited atoms—if peace was not soon made, in the Margravine's opinion a religious war would ensue.

The King lost no time in sending the sinews of war to Mirabeau, but he proudly declined to accede to his sister's request and to make the first advance to France. Let them first state their views, and failing them he would then turn to England. He wrote a long and depressed letter from Leitmeritz, expatiating on the justice of his cause as the champion of the religion and liberties of Germany, and on the malignancy of his enemies and the misfortunes which had befallen him.

Wilhelmina soothed and sympathised as only she

could. On July 18th she wrote that, to-day she is only writing to the *brother*—no politics, no military intelligence; she is so ill in mind and body, these troubles one after another! Fate raining hard blows! Weary of this world she would like to retire into a little corner with Frederic. But he has been created to make the future of a great people, she goes on, prophetically. Yet how evilly the world speaks of him—that he wishes to seize all Germany, when *she* knows that he is longing for peace. He is more attacked by pen and tongue than he attacks with his army.

Frederic's announcement of his disinclination to make any advance to France rather damped her hopes of any success of Mirabeau's mission. Folard had always led her to understand that France was awaiting Frederic's proposals. By her treaty with Vienna, France was probably bound to indemnify Austria for Silesia, and also Saxony by some territorial compensation. Louis, though very wishful for peace, thought it only obtainable by annihilating Prussia, and, personally, he was incensed against Frederic by the latter's satires on himself and the Pompadour. She was the person on whom everything hung. In the meantime the dissensions between the Austrian commanders, the Emperor and the Princes, and the bad state of the "miserable" Army shed a ray of hope. This Army, however, was not quite to be despised. The Margravine wrote advising her brother to detach a corps to give an account of it. The Margrave went to Erlangen and interviewed the Prince of Hildburghausen, and Wilhelmina was able to send useful information to her brother, not only about the Army and the Empire, but about the intended attack of Sweden on Prussia. Never before, she wrote, had so many Powers combined against one sovereign. But the advance of D'Estrées and the French alarmed her most. She feared her communication with Frederic being cut, if Hildburghausen sent his troops by Hof, in her territory, into Saxony. As it was she was already much

suspected and spied upon. Complaints had been made to the Margrave of her action in sending back Prussian deserters. Three days later the news of the French in Northern Germany pierced her heart with grief, and she was in despair at feeling useless to him for whom she would gladly lay down her life, could she but secure him some rest. But, instead, there came the disaster of the loss of the magazine at Zittau, the key, as the Margravine calls it, of Saxony and Silesia, which was the result of the Prince of Prussia's "parabolic march." Frederic wrote, angry, defiant, kicking against fate and his enemies; and he went off to Bautzen to meet his unhappy brother, and to send him home, disgraced and broken-hearted, to die. On the top of all this fell the blow of Hastenbeck, Cumberland out of the game, while Frederic, in the hills round Weissenburg, was vainly trying to meet and account with Daun for Zittau. A wretched three weeks; no blow really struck in retaliation.

The distressing news reached the Margravine at Sanspareil, the hunting lodge by Kaiserhammer on the Bamberg border. She learnt it through some deserters, and was very downcast and overwhelmed. The French had now got as far as Weimar, menacing Saxony on that side. Among the Army of the Empire, only a few miles off at Forchheim, there was insubordination; she sent the news to Frederic, but guardedly, not having her cypher with her, as she had not intended to make a long stay at Sanspareil, and, moreover, she did not wish to depress him still more. She had seen an officer recruiting for Pomerania, and there was no danger on that side yet.

But if Frederic was inactive, Wilhelmina was not idle. She sent him constant cyphers with military details and information. While she sympathised with Prince William and pleaded for him, the peacemaker now as ever, she had to report the disaffection of her son-in-law, who, with his troops, had entered the

Imperial service again. Nearer and nearer had again flowed the tide of war. The north of Baireuth, round Hof, was swarming with spies; Austrian Hussars had passed through the country on their way to the camp of the combined armies. Directly everyone was collected the vast conglomerate mechanism would be set in motion against Frederic, and Wilhelmina, feeling crushed beneath the burden of her anxieties, and dragging on the most miserable life, wondered how Frederic could keep up his spirits. The situation seemed to her as serious as that of Rome when taken by the Gauls, and when Hannibal entered Italy, or of France before the battle of Tenen.

Towards the end of July a letter from Voltaire came to her for the King, and she pleaded for him, telling how sympathetically he was writing in this crisis, trying to repair the past by his action. How she wishes his country might follow his example! The terrible turn of events, and the consequent anxieties at Baireuth, had evoked tender memories and deep sympathy on the shores of the Leman. Voltaire had recently received as his guest one of the Margravine's chamberlains. They had talked of the "*adorable Princesse,*" and had drunk to the health of d'Adhémar, lately appointed Grand Master of the Ceremonies. To him Voltaire sent congratulatory verses; the Sage was happy among his vineyards and his gardens, but the Marquis was happier still:

> "*Mais vous êtes bien plus heureux*
> *Vous vivez près de Wilhelmine.*"

To the Margravine herself, Voltaire wrote that his heart was touched, for he saw it was her beautiful soul which made her miserable, and he tried to cheer her.

"Your Royal Highness will find in this letter things which relate to those on which she has reflected herself. Although the first tentatives for peace have not succeeded, yet I am convinced that in the end they will succeed. Will you allow me to communicate one of my ideas to you? I fancy that the Duke of Richelieu would be flattered if he were addressed. I think he believes that it is

necessary to hold the balance, and that he would be very pleased if the interests of the King his master agreed with those of the allies, and with yours. If at some opportunity you would have him sounded it would not be difficult.

"No one would be more suitable than M. de Richelieu to undertake such a mission. I do not take the liberty of speaking about it, Madame, but only in the supposition that the King your brother should be obliged to take that course, and I venture to tell you that in that case he would have much obligation to you, even should he be obliged to make sacrifices. I hazard this idea, not as a proposal, even less as an advice; it does not belong to me to give any, but as a simple wish only arising out of my zeal.

"VOLTAIRE."

The Margravine laid this advice to heart, though she did not immediately act upon it.

In August the Margravine reported to the King troubles and divisions in the joint army. The fear that the French, bent only on delivering Saxony for the Dauphiness, declined to serve in Bohemia, or under any but their own generals, seemed to be a good sign. Soubise was advancing, and the Imperial corps was ordered to leave Fürth and join him, yet there was friction, and she hoped her letter had done good.

In one of these deep black-bordered cypher letters which she wrote nearly every day to Frederic in those times of stress, the Margravine reported that her son-in-law's troops had mutinied, heroically declining, Protestants that they were, to fight against the Prussian King. Their ruler punished them cruelly. The religious question was dragged in, and the brave Würtembergers spoke their mind to their Duke on the subject of his poor Duchess, which hardly made him better inclined towards her. He even suspected that Frederic had instigated this mutiny.

On August 2nd, the "wild Margrave" of Anspach ended his chequered career in a fit of apoplexy. Wilhelmina wrote to her brother to inform him that he had one enemy the less, and that just before his death the Margrave had seen his wife again. But it was too late, he was speechless, and the

"cat and dog" couple parted as they lived. He was succeeded by his son, the Margrave Alexander, who became Margrave of Baireuth in 1769, on the death of his cousin, and who, abdicating in 1791, and handing over the principality to Prussia, died at Hammersmith in 1806, the last of the Margraves of Anspach-Baireuth. From the very commencement of his reign he had trouble. His father's death found him in the clutches of France and Austria, though his aunt, the Margravine, wrote to the King that his sympathies were, she thought, Prussian; but it would be difficult for him to free himself, and also to make peace with Baireuth after the Reitzenstein offence and other causes of friction. Witmann had hurried off to Vienna with the news of the Margrave's death, and to concert measures to retain Anspach on the Austrian side.

We have seen the Margravine indefatigable in Italy, and undergoing exceeding personal exertion in summer heat in the course of her archæological and artistic researches. The same indomitable spirit now led her to render her brother every possible help. Day and night, she writes, she cudgels her poor head to think what she can do. Two thousand Austrian Hussars passed through Baireuth on August 5th, on their way either to Baireuth or Saxony. She made a supreme effort and dragged herself, frail and suffering as she was, out in the heat, to see them pass, and to count them, one by one. Next day she reported to Frederic, with the minuteness of an intelligence officer, their numbers and appearance. But, with the devotion of a woman jealous for him she loves, she adds, that she has much to reproach herself with in the ill-wishes she sent after them, and would fain have been Clorinda or Bradamart to annihilate them! Nor was she less active as a recruiting officer. Though afraid actually to help Protestants who came to her secretly, asking to join the Prussian troops, she was constantly occupied in collecting, hiding, and forwarding Prussian prisoners. Men

were what she thought the King most needed at this juncture, and she sent hints and suggestions. Indeed, helping Frederic was now her only interest. How far off already the gay days of operas and *fêtes*—passed for ever! His dear letters were her only comfort.

In a cypher letter of August 4th, Wilhelmina was able to give the real intentions of France, which she had heard from Folard's friend.

Her anxieties were increased by the presence in her own town of Hof of an intelligence officer in disguise, between whom and Prince Hildburghausen orderlies were constantly passing. The Army of the Empire, at last assembled, had encamped with great pomp at Fürth; the vacillating Bishop of Bamberg coming over to inspect it. All the contingents were there, even that of Baireuth. The Margrave had, at last, given way; Frederic had advised it, "that the little barque of Baireuth might not be engulfed in his shipwreck."

The King was busy trying to repair his brother's *sottises* and to deal a blow at the Austrians, and turn them back from the Lusatian borders. Wilhelmina, meanwhile, kept him informed of the progress of the French negotiations. Mirabeau she believed to be in Paris. He had gained over Madame de Mirepoix, the friend of the Pompadour, and Frederic's firmness made her hope that they would soon come to discussions. Belle-isle had left the Council, and Mirabeau was now very well received. This letter, she added, was being sent with great difficulty. So her little scraps of information, all in cypher, are disjointed, and written at any odd moment on the chance of being able to send them. The Duke of Richelieu, she heard, was to command the combined army, with D'Estrées in Westphalia and Soubise on the Rhine. If the French failed, she suggests a Turkish alliance, attacking Vienna in the rear! If France occupied Leipsig, Frederic would be cut off from Prussia. Every few days she sent a line, sometimes entirely personal. When she heard that he

was marching into Saxony—those futile three weeks of blows that missed fire—she writes how she thinks of him night and day, and sees him in her dreams during her short sleeps.

On the night of the 11th to 12th August the contingents of Mainz and Darmstadt, and the Anspach dragoons, with others, camped at Erlangen, and marched on by Forchheim and Bamberg to join the French. The Margravine informed the King that the rest of the Army of the Empire was to follow, and was to be at the *rendez-vous* on the 20th. She begged Frederic to make peace as, even if English help comes, it might be too late. With apologies for giving advice, she suggested terms, to give time—the evacuation of Saxony, which this army was massing to deliver—which would please Germany, and cut the ground from under France's feet. This advice she repeated again the next day on hearing that this joint army was to march into Saxony and surround the Prussians entirely. She was not sure of her news, but she was told that the evacuation, once conceded, all would go well, and added that there was disunion among the Imperial troops, and that the Protestants are half-hearted, and will not fight against the King of Prussia.

The Margravine had great difficulty in getting her letters through. Sometimes her courier could not find Frederic, once he was captured. But, on the 15th of August, she risks sending the "state" of the Circles Army. It was not the "miserable" Army of the Empire which alarmed her—that was so shaky that Prince Hildburghausen wanted to resign the command, but, if the French managed to reach Berlin, Wilhelmina was torn with anxiety for the family and the treasure.

But, in the middle of August, the Margravine received a letter from the King, so terrible, so urgent, that it relegated all other considerations into the background. Frederic, crushed with the blunderings of Prince William and of the Duke of Cumberland, was eating his heart out on the heights above Weissenburg, in a state

of enforced inactivity, vainly trying to bring the Austrians to a fight. His own words convey some feeble idea of his state of mind, and of the effect which they must have produced upon the unhappy recipient.

"Weissenburg, *Aug.* 12th, 1757.

"My dear Sister,

"I have scarcely any heart to write to you from here," he began, and went on gently, ever careful of her, with a few cheering words of hope that soon there might be better news. But—

"My task is a hard one. I had rather a hundred times be dead than to live a year longer in the state in which I am; but, nevertheless, I will do my utmost to resist, and my best consolation will be to have sold my life and my liberty dearly. . . . To-morrow the communications will be cut. . . . I send you a reply to Voltaire. It will depend on you to forward it to him or not. I embrace you with all my heart, my only comfort and stay. . . . If you find the epigram too strong, you have only to keep it, and to send the rest of the letter to V."

The letter opened with some satirical verses on Louis XV. The Margravine perceived that, under present circumstances, they would do much harm. So, with diplomatic guile, she cut them off, and wrote to Voltaire the well-meant subterfuge that, "he had not been able to copy out the letter which he wrote to you. It began with some verses. Instead of throwing the sand-box on it, he threw the inkstand, which is the reason why it is cut off."

Frederic's letter is lost. But various quotations from it, and references to it, by Voltaire, during the next few months, leave us in no doubt as to its import and to the King's intentions. To Richelieu, *à vous seul*, he wrote on August 23rd, almost immediately on its receipt:

"The King of Prussia has begun to write somewhat confidentially again. He informs me that he is resolved to kill himself if things are irretrievable. *Madame la Margrave*, his sister, writes to me that she will end her life if the King, her brother, ends his."

To Tronchin he wrote, on September 1st, that he hears from Bohemia that the King is irretrievably lost:

"The King writes to me that nothing remains but to sell his life dearly. To the Duchess of Saxe-Gotha he mentioned, in a letter of September 22nd, that—

"I had the honour of receiving a little while ago a letter from the King of Prussia, in which he told me that there was nothing left for him but to sell his life dearly."

And, on September 12th, he wrote to his friend, the Comte d'Argental, of his "*ancien disciple*":

"I do not know if I acquainted you with the letter he wrote to me about three weeks ago: 'I have learnt,' he said, 'that you were interested in my success and my misfortune; nothing is left but for me to sell my life dearly.'"

It may well be imagined with what an agonised heart the Margravine sent on to Voltaire this dire epistle. This is her letter, which Voltaire thought even more "lamentable" than its enclosure.

"One finds out who are one's friends when one is in misfortune. The letter you have written does honour to your thoughts. I cannot tell you how much I feel your conduct. The King feels it as much as I do. You will find herein a note which he has ordered me to send to you. He sustains all his misfortunes with a courage and firmness worthy of him. That great man is just the same. . . . I am in an awful state, and shall not survive the destruction of my home and my family. It is the only comfort left me. You will have fine subjects to work up for tragedies. *O tempora! O mores!* You will, perhaps, cause tears to be shed by an illusionary representation, while people look with dry eyes on the misfortunes of a whole house against which, after all, there is no real complaint. I cannot tell you any more; my soul is so upset that I do not know what I am doing. But, whatever happens, be sure that I am more than ever your friend, W."

Voltaire, "busy comforting them both," replied from *Les Délices*, his new home, assuring her that he had "been melted to tears by the letter with which Your Royal Highness had honoured him." He would like to have thrown himself at her feet . . . he had never for a moment lost sight of Her Royal Highness and her august family. "Your warm heart is going through rough trials. What has passed in Sweden, what is

happening in Germany, preys on your feelings." He hoped the storm would not spread to her principality, "but your soul feels all the shocks, and it is by the heart alone that you suffer. May such well-founded fears not injure your health." He hoped for peace, but did not think it very near. He believed, too, in Frederic. "Never shall I believe things so desperate as long as the King has an army. He has often conquered; he may conquer again." But should the worst come, and leave him only his courage, he would always remain great, covered with another sort of glory. Would that he were more assured of his personal worth, "respected by all ranks as man more than as King. Who can feel, Madame, better than you, what it is to be superior to birth. I should be too long if I said all I thought, and all my affectionate respect inspires. Deign to read in the heart of *frère*

VOLTAIRE."

The Margravine wrote to Frederic in reply that the lost courier had turned up with the letters, but that the situation was indeed terrible. But her line was to cheer him all she could. In cypher she sends him somewhat reassuring gossip from Vienna. It seemed that the French conduct was inexplicable, and Austria did not like them entering Saxony. They were so violent, but if Frederic would evacuate Saxony, it should calm them. Two Princes had left the Austrian Army, very dissatisfied. To this letter she added disquieting news about Würtemberg. The Duke was going on with the marriage of his brother Louis and the Archduchess, Maria Theresa's sister, and was putting Roman Catholics into his Ministry, which was bad for religion. France was arranging to take one of Maria Theresa's provinces, and the Archduchess was to have the Netherlands, except the five towns. But France was absolutely firm that Silesia should not be given back. Wilhelmina implored the King to take care of the treasure and of the

Royal Family at Dresden, and to try and arrange matters with them.

It was increasingly difficult to get news through. Letters will be old, she wrote in a short cypher, with the news of the occupation of Erfürt and Gotha by 120,000 French-Imperial troops. The great flood, so long threatening, was indeed advancing very near her borders. But she added the cheering assurance, on good authority, that if the King could only hold his ground till the winter, and then gained a victory, he would have won the game.

But, even as she wrote, the famous *Epître à ma Sœur*, written on the woody hills above the Neisse, was winging its way to her. It is a long and a grand poem, written in the despair of that weary waiting time. The jingle of the French rhymes of this, the first of Frederic's "Lamentation Psalms," has been paraphrased into English by his Scotch biographer in as fine a manner as the latter's ancestors rendered the Psalms of another monarch, also bowed down by the malignity of his enemies, and the reverses of the fortune of war. It concludes with the ominous lines:

> *"Ainsi mon seul asile et mon unique port*
> *Se trouve, chère sœur, dans les bras de la mort."*

Having shot off this lucubration to carry, intentionally or not, dire forebodings into Wilhelmina's soul, Frederic marched rapidly across into Thuringia, *viâ* Dresden, to meet the Army of the Empire drawing dangerously near Erfürt. A dateless cypher of the Margravine's gave him the numbers of the army in Thuringia and of that of Soubise, who, collecting Hessians, Brunswickers, and Hanoverians, was going to besiege Magdeburg. But she added that Maria Theresa would not yield an inch of Netherlands, and that there must come a rupture between her and France.

In cypher, she kept him *au fait* on his march with the French-Imperial movements, though the courier had

sometimes difficulty in getting through. One was nearly killed by the Pandours. By him she sent a description of the panic among the second column of the Imperial Army in the defiles near Coburg the Thursday before. The Protestants cried "*Friederich*," and the "*canaille*" bolted off to Meiningen. She added that Folard was ill at Münich, with grief, she thought, over the ruin of his plans, but *her* hopes of France were increasing.

Upon Folard, gilded with Austrian gold, she could no longer entirely rely, and Frederic wrote surprised that "the man of Paris did not write or give any sign of life, though he had been there a long time." This was Mirabeau. He, too, had proved a broken reed, for his relative, Rouillé, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, had been dismissed. Voltaire's suggestion that Richelieu might be made use of as a peacemaker, now bore fruit. The former had paved the way.

"In my last letter to Madame la Margrave de Baireuth," he had written to the Duke on August 23rd, "I could not prevent myself from letting her perceive how much I wish you would unite the talent of mediator to that of general. . . . You are not ignorant that Mde. de Baireuth has already undertaken a negotiation which has had no success, but what has not succeeded at one time succeeds at another. . . . I think I ought to tell you that, if it was possible to persuade the King of Prussia to place everything in your hands, it would be only through Madame la Margrave that it would be possible to do it."

The immediate result was that, on September 7th, Frederic sent a disguised officer into the French camp with a letter and a *douceur* of £15,000 for the money-grabbing Duke.

But two days later, ere this mission could bear fruit, other blows had rained on Frederic. On September 9th Cumberland signed with France the derogatory Convention of Kloster-Sieben. The Swedes entered Pomerania. It was the nadir of Frederic's fortunes. Even his indomitable soul quivered and sank, beaten down by the hail of calamities. In the darkness of those days there did indeed seem to him but one way out of the

impasse—"death, the only haven." Thus had he written to Wilhelmina during the weary time of inactivity on the Saxon hills an inactivity galling his restless spirit almost beyond endurance. In this depressed condition he received further buffets of Fate, and, two days later, he wrote to her again, in cypher, and unsigned:

"All I can do in the present situation, my dear sister, is to fortify myself as well as I can with my philosophy; *up till now* misfortune has stiffened me instead of knocking me down. . . . One must be patient and swim against the torrent, *as long as one has strength*."

He continues with a page of affectionate declarations and loving eulogies, embracing her from the bottom of his soul. He was marching so rapidly that there could be no more letters for a fortnight; but he implored to know if she had received his "*Epître*," or not, and—he enclosed a note to Voltaire.

This letter is also lost. But that its purport was as dire as the former one the Margravine's letter sent with it shows.

Next day Frederic wrote again, thanking her warmly for her news, and her "hopes, though vague, but one must clutch at straws .... the crisis could not be more serious than it is now." The news about Mirabeau's failure with Belleisle was very unfortunate, "but I will not give up hope, unless there is no more hope at all."

What the agony must have been to Wilhelmina, her wail to Frederic, and another "lamentable letter" to Voltaire, only feebly convey. Her brother himself had warned her that for fifteen days, during the forced marches, she could hear no news of him. By then, she felt, all would be decided one way or another. The victorious King would be himself again, or—Frederic would have found a soldier's death.

She sent on the fatal note to Voltaire, with a letter calm with the calmness of despair. She had *la mort*

au cœur, and confessed to the philosopher friend that her philosophy had failed. Voltaire would be as little pleased as she was with the King's intentions. As his note enclosed showed, Voltaire's verses had not had the effect upon his resolutions that the Margravine had hoped:

"It only remains for me to follow his fate, if it is an unfortunate one. I never piqued myself on being a philosopher. I tried my best to become one. The little progress I made taught me to despise grandeur and riches, but I found nothing in philosophy which could cure the wounds of the heart except the means of getting free of one's ills by ceasing to live. The state in which I am is worse than death. I see the greatest man of the century, my brother, reduced to the most frightful extremities. I see my whole family exposed to dangers and perils, my native land torn by pitiless enemies, the country where I am perhaps threatened by similar misfortunes. Would to Heaven that I alone had to bear all the ills I have just described to you. I would suffer them, but with resignation.

"Forgive me this description. You tempt me, by the interest you take in what concerns me, to open my heart to you. Alas! Hope has almost vanished! When Fortune changes, she is almost as faithful in her persecutions as in her favours. History is full of such examples, but I have not found any similar to those which we see, nor a war so inhuman and cruel among civilised nations. You would groan if you knew the sad state of Germany and Prussia. The cruelties committed by the Russians in the latter make Nature tremble. How happy you are in your Hermitage, where you rest on your laurels, and where you can philosophise in cold blood over the frenzies of men. I wish you every happiness there. If fortune favours us again, count on my gratitude, and I shall never forget the proofs of devotion which you have given me; my feelings are the warmest. I am never half a friend, and I shall always be truly that of '*Frère Voltaire*!'

"WILHELMINA.

"My compliments to Mde. Denis. I beg you continue to write to the King."

Less than a month ago Wilhelmina had made up her mind that her only comfort was the knowledge that she would not survive the ruin of her house. Her natural feebleness would have mercifully liberated her spirit from its frail envelope. But Frederic's dire resolve to cut short his career was a totally different thing;

she could conceive of no circumstances which would demand such a sacrifice. She employs all the powerful leverage of her love, all the armoury of her pen, to avert it.

"Baireuth, *Sept. 15th*, 1757.

"My dearest Brother,

"Your letter, and that you wrote to Voltaire, my dear brother, have nearly killed me. Great God, what dire resolves! Ah! my dear brother, you say you love me, and you plunge a dagger in my heart. Your *Epître*, which I have received, made me shed a flood of tears. I am now ashamed of my weakness. My misfortune would be so great that it should nerve me to a less unworthy action. Your fate would decide mine; I should not survive your misfortunes, nor those of my family. You can reckon that it is my firm resolve. But, after that confession, I venture to implore you to examine the pitiable state of your enemy when you were before Prague. It is the sudden change of luck for both sides. The change may be renewed when one thinks least about it. Caesar was the slave of pirates, and became the master of the world. A great genius like you finds resources even when all is lost, and it is impossible that the frenzy against you can last. My heart bleeds when I think of the wretched Prussians. What horrible barbarity are these details of the cruelties which are being committed! I feel all that you feel about it, my dear brother. I know your heart and your sympathy for your subjects. I suffer a thousand times more than I can say, but hope does not desert me. I have received your letter of the 14th by W——. How kind to think of me who have only a useless love to offer, which is very richly rewarded by yours."

On September 13th the King entered Erfürt without a blow; the French-Imperial Army had vanished like ghosts to the hills near Eisenach. Then ensued for him another long month of waiting about. The two generals of the enemy were, as the Margravine had added in cypher to her cry of pain, at daggers drawn, and their third column had stuck at Saalfeld for want of transport. Though communication was increasingly difficult—the courier bearing her reply to the *Epître*, being drunk, had been captured—she contrived to warn him that Bevern was to be attacked by 55,000 French, and offered to get recruits for the *chasseurs*. But even valets sent as messengers were threatened with hanging if caught, and she feared that her letter and one from

Mirabeau had been taken and her route of communication discovered.

On the 17th Frederic wrote to her two letters in one day. The lion was standing at bay. His enemy fled when he approached, and then attacked behind his back. The Hanoverians had forsaken him. Pomerania, Brandenburg, Silesia had been invaded by the foe, and the Royal family were abandoning Berlin. He had written for peace to Richelieu. "I am in a cruel plight. Heaven knows how it will end, but for myself I do not see daylight." In the second long, despairing letter Frederic no longer minces matters, nor attempts to spare Wilhelmina. In the supreme moment of misery, he has heard that she, whose letters are his only comfort, feels as he does. But "I am determined to throw myself on the first of the enemy's generals who comes near me in battle, at the risk of whatever may happen." "I shall still bless Heaven for his mercy if he grants me the favour of perishing sword in hand." He foams out to his "*incomparable sœur*" his fulminations against his enemies, his maddened railings against fate. The old classical atmosphere, shared with Wilhelmina from youth up, steals over him. He recalls the Roman suicides, and draws her after him.

"I am quite resolved to fight against ill-fortune, but, at the same time, I am also resolved not to sign my shame and the opprobrium of my family. That, my dear sister, is what is passing in my mind, and the general confession that I make of what is agitating me. As for you, my incomparable sister, I have not the heart to turn you from your resolution. We think the same, and I cannot condemn in you the feelings I experience daily. . . . One hisses an actor who remains on the stage when he has no more to say. . . . Only you are left me in the universe who is still devoted to me; my friends, my dearest relations are in the grave; in short, I have lost everything. If you take the resolve I have taken, we will finish our misfortunes and our miseries together."

A week later he wrote in yet deeper—in his deepest—despair, the *Epître* to D'Argens.

Wilhelmina listens, agonised with passionate suicidal

sympathy, to these wild laments out of the camps in Saxony and Thüringen. But, like a true woman, with the tenderness of a mother seeking to distract the attention of a wilful child intent on running into danger, she seeks to interest him in what would interest him indeed—a small personal affair of her own. She sent him the statement of what was due to her by an East Indian Company in which she has money invested. No one around her can unravel the accounts; will he do it for her, if she does not bother him too much with such trifles, and puts in a complaint over the stoppages of her couriers, and the consequent loss of the only comfort left her, his letters.

Her letters follow fast in those dark days. An undated scrap, all personal, a moan over the "change of Fortune," while writing that the state of things is desperate; but she tries to calm him, with hopes of France and peace, now the negotiations with Richelieu had begun. Bernis had sent her a nice reply to her letter and her first overture. His proposals are that there must be treaties made, things to go back into the old line, and a war indemnity. She hears France and Austria have half split, and that politicians say that a general peace will be made, that Prussia will indeed lose something, but that the peace will not last, and that Frederic will recover everything, owing to the breach of France and Vienna. From Folard, at Vienna, she hears that France cannot do without him, and she tries to cheer him and draw off his thoughts from the terrible line they have taken. She cannot refrain, however, from standing up for her brother William, who was "sulking," Frederic had said, over his dismissal. He had written twice to her about his misfortunes. Wilhelmina writes that she thinks him kind-hearted, but impulsive, but cannot help feeling that his honour is lost.

A week later she sent, in cypher, fresh news from Paris. Mirabeau begged them to take courage. The

French nation was calmer to Frederic, and if he could but maintain himself, all would be well. Her letters were sent on to Cardinal Bernis, to whom she tried to point out that the real interests of France lay with Prussia. If the Empress of Russia was not dead, the French would drive back the Russians by an invasion of Turks and Tartars in Russia. She added that the French financiers were in a bad way, and they would be only too happy to make peace, and that all her conversations guarantee Silesia to him—that Belleisle's power is on the wane all round, but that Bernis is all-powerful.

Frederic's negotiations with Richelieu were not progressing. Though well intentioned, the Duke had no power to treat, so really peace prospects at this time hung on the Margravine's efforts at Paris through Mirabeau and his relative, the Cardinal; the only lever the Count had left now the Minister was dismissed.

The same day the devoted sister wrote again, also in cypher. From Frederic's last letter she feared that a year of war had exhausted his treasure, and that he would be obliged to borrow. So she offered him her jewels, as she had before offered them to the Margrave, and the two nearest to her should share them. If they were sent to Poland or Holland with Frederic's plate, they would raise a nice sum. Anything to help him; she would borrow at Nüremberg in the name of one of her brothers, if she dared. She was anxious about Bevern's army in Silesia, but the Austrians were in a bad way, and the patriotism of Germany was with him. Magdeburg would hold out, and she suggested the King should cut the French supplies. France was really trying to finish the war, and England would make a last effort. From a Dutch officer the Margravine had news that Holland would give twenty-four million gulden for expenses. The King of Sardinia, also, would show himself in his true colours, and England would have Corsica. All this, she went on, should cheer him. At

first the conditions of peace would seem hard, but would be made easier.

Then she sent him the home news—how splendidly firm the Margrave was standing, though he had been obliged to send two contingents, to billet Imperial officials, and to pay the "Roman Months." But she still would find means to send recruits. She feared an Imperial mandate, and "execution" about the militia, and begs Frederic to send the Margrave the little line of gratitude for his behaviour, which she felt that he, "faithful among the faithless found," so well deserved.

Lower and lower sank the King's spirits, and dragged after them those of Wilhelmina. "I ask only for death," he wrote to her on September 28th. ". . . I have but one gate to escape by; it would be cruel to interdict it to me. I suffer a thousand deaths a day, and one only would deliver me from my sufferings. If anything could make me hesitate in my choice it is my affection for you." ". . . If anything in the world could console me, it is the tender interest you take in my misfortune . . . but the cup is nearly full . . . the subject of my letters is lugubrious . . ." What must they have been for Wilhelmina to read! and he enclosed two copies of his *Epître a D'Argens: Apologie pour le suicide.* One was to be sent on to Voltaire.

By the end of September Frederic had given up all hope of the negotiations through the Duke. "I no longer see daylight there," he wrote to his sister pointing out to her in detail the military situation. How long ago the days when he apologised for boring her with politics!

Voltaire was writing to his friend at Lyons at the same time, and in the same strain, and suggesting that Tronchin, in his frequent conversations with the Cardinal de Tençin, should ask if France were seriously intending to abandon the King of Prussia to his fate, and to destroy a balance she had long thought necessary.

Two days later Frederic wrote again—he wrote nearly

every day now—regretting "the peaceful time when our correspondence was not hindered by any obstacle, and certainly I little thought the last time that I had the satisfaction of embracing you at the Hermitage, that events as strange as those of these times could occur."

Wilhelmina's anxiety on Frederic's account had led to a wild resolve. Powerless to deter him any longer by her pen, she felt that only by seeing him, speaking to him, could she snatch him from the jaws of death. Frederic had received a pathetic little dateless letter—"Had I but known you were going to stay so long at Erfürt, I would have entreated you to allow me to come. I am *au désespoir* at not having done so!" Imagine Wilhelmina even dreaming, in her present state and that of the country, of undertaking such a journey! Frederic was glad she had not done so, though how he longed to see her once more! He often, he writes, tells himself that he might have wearied her with his melancholy arguments had he but had the happiness of seeing her. But the mere fact of her even contemplating such a step shows how agonised she was as to whither such arguments might not lead.

Two days later, it is a money letter that Wilhelmina receives. Funds were indeed low, and finances in a bad way, the troops, 200,000 of them, being paid with the treasure. "But diamonds are bad capital; no one will lend anything on them. For the love of God keep yours, and consider your own preservation, and that of your country in these calamitous times! But I swear to you that I am as much obliged to you as if I had received millions at your hands, and as if you had lost all in my cause, but your misfortunes, far from lightening mine, would only increase them."

Again, the very next day, an outpouring of gratitude for her love and all she has done for him, graven in his heart in lines of flame. "Though I wish passionately to see you," he felt himself obliged to oppose her plan. He was "in an ever-changing position, without fixed

abode, one foot in the stirrup." He could not send sufficiently strong escorts, the enemy swarmed on the road. But, if the French proposed an armistice, she could come to Leipsig, "under the excuse of seeing about our dear mother's legacy—but in this bad weather, in your state of health, to undertake a journey of this kind, great God, it makes me tremble!"

To the Margrave, with assurances of affectionate friendship, he sent a message that rumours he heard made him fear for Baireuth, and he begged him to furl his sails during the storm, and not to increase the tale of shipwrecks.

The Margravine pressed on the negotiation question; she was so anxious that the King should take the initial step of sending someone to France to negotiate in his name. She heard that the King of France was irritated by Kollin. From her information she felt sure that no designs France had with Austria about the Netherlands would prevent her making peace with Frederic. She feared England would pull San Domingo as the lion's portion out of the spoil, but, on the other hand, Hanover would compensate Saxony. She bade the King beware of traitors, as his conversations at meals are retailed.

Frederic replied in cypher that he does not gossip at table, and, moreover, only dined with Prussians. He was awaiting Richelieu's reply before doing any more, to see what he says. Richelieu was indeed doing his best, and willingly, but the King of France would not hear a word, and Richelieu had no more success than Vatan, Folard, or Mirabeau. The King wrote, worried. Lehwalde was setting out to follow after the Russians, retreating from Prussia, but Frederic was being harassed in Thuringia by the enemies who never stayed to meet him. The letter, however, was balm to Wilhelmina, for the dreaded "frenzy" had passed, and Frederic was himself again.

Voltaire had written a long letter, full of classical

and historical arguments and allusions, such as Frederic loved, to dissuade the King from the Roman suicide he was evidently contemplating, and mingled with the delicate flattery the sage knew so well how to administer. "I am busy comforting him and Mde. de Baireuth, his sister," the philosopher had spitefully written to Tronchin. "The King writes to me that it only remains to sell his life dearly, and I exhort him to live on the chance that he be utterly miserable."

He wrote again. Recalling to the Solomon of the North his noble ambitions, so often enshrined in prose and verse, the Sage of Ferney flattered him about the *Epître* to d'Argens he had sent him, and then alluded to the sister's tears, with which it had been accompanied. But "the *Epître* had made him, too, tremble."

Frederic replied in some of his finest verses. He was a man again, determined "to live and die as King." No need after enclosing such verses to write to anxious Wilhelmina :—

"For the love of God do not make yourself ill; you who want to draw me out of my troubles, will you plunge a dagger in my breast? My dear sister, await with patience the unravelling of all this, and do not fear anything from my precipitation."

Wilhelmina had offered her life as well as her diamonds. He now fears he has gone too far, and that he cannot draw her back from the brink of the grave where they had both been standing.

"Take care, I implore you, of a health on which my life depends, and do not be the most cruel of my implacable enemies, depriving me of what I hold most dear in the world."

Nothing shows the versatility of this remarkable woman more than the letter she wrote at this time to Voltaire. It would do justice to a war-correspondent or a historian, by its clear account of the military operations of the last three months. She evidently thought the philosopher did not sufficiently appreciate

the gravity of the situation. Communication was slow and difficult between the Leman and Baireuth but,

"Your letters have all reached me safely. The anxiety of my mind has overwhelmed my body so that I have not been able to write to you any earlier. I am surprised that you are astonished at our despair,"

she continues, writing as if she and Frederic were indeed "one soul."

"News must be scarce in your neighbourhood, as you do not know what goes on in the world,"

and she proceeds to enlighten him succinctly.

"I mean to give you an account in detail of the coil of our troubles; I will only give it you shortly. The battle of Kollin was already over, and the Prussians were master of the field, on the hill, on the right wing of the enemy, when a certain evil genius, whom you did not like, took it into his head, against the express orders he had received from the King, to attack the Austrian centre; this made a great gap between the Prussian left wing, which was victorious, and this corps. It also prevented that wing being reinforced. The King stopped the gap with two regiments of cavalry. A cannonade and musketry fire drove them to flight. The Austrians, who had had time to pull themselves together, fell on the flank and rear of the Prussians. The King, in spite of his ability and his pains, was unable to stop the confusion. He ran some danger of being killed. The first battalion of his Foot Guards gave him the time to retire by throwing themselves in front of him. He saw the massacre of his fine fellows, who all perished, except two hundred, who did cruel butcher's work among the enemy. Next day the siege of Prague was raised. The King formed two armies. He gave command of one to my brother of Prussia and kept the other. He drew a line from Lissa to Leitmeritz, where he made his camp. Desertion began in his army. Out of 3,000 Saxons scarcely 200 or 300 remained. The King had in front of him Nadasti's army; my brother, who was at Lissa, had Daun's. My brother drew his supplies from Zittau, the King from Leitmeritz. Daun crossed the Elbe and stole a march on the Prince of Prussia. He took Gabel, where there were four Prussian battalions, and marched on Zittau. The Prince struck camp to go to the help of that town. He lost his transport and his pontoons as the wagons were too wide for the narrow mountain roads. He arrived in time to save the garrison and part of the magazine. The King was obliged to return into Saxony. The combined armies encamped at Bautzen and Bernstadt, that of the Austrians between Görlitz and Schonau in an impregnable position.

On September 17th the King marched on the enemy to try to seize Görlitz. The two armies faced one another with an artillery duel, without any result, but the Prussians succeeded in their object and took Görlitz. They then encamped from Bernstadt, on the height of Javeric, to the Neisse, where the army of General Winterfeld was, stretching as far as Radomeritz. The army of the Prince of Soubise, joined to that of the Empire, had advanced to Erfürt. It could only cut off the Elbe by posting itself at Leipsig, which would have made the position of the King very dangerous. He therefore left the army, giving the command to the Prince of Bevern, and marched with the utmost haste and secrecy to Erfürt. It was necessary to surprise the Imperial Army, but their pusillanimous troops fled in disorder into the impenetrable defiles of Thuringia behind Eisenach. The Prince of Soubise, too weak to resist the Prussians, retired thither. It was at Erfürt, and again at Naumburg, that Fate shot its poisoned arrows against the King. He learnt of the disgraceful treaty concluded by the Duke of Cumberland, the march of the Duke of Richelieu, the death and defeat of Winterfeld, who was attacked by the whole army of Nadasti, consisting of 24,000 men, and having only 6,000 with which to defend himself, the entrance of the Austrians into Silesia and the Swedes into the Old Mark, where they seemed about to take the road to Berlin. Add to this that Prussia from Memel to Königsberg is reduced to one vast desert. There is a specimen of our misfortunes. Since then the Austrians have advanced to Breslau. The able conduct of the Prince of Bevern prevented them besieging it. They are now occupied with besieging Schweidnitz. One of their columns, of 4,000 men, has made a requisition on Berlin. The arrival of the Prince Maurice has made them evacuate the King's country. At this moment I have just heard that Leipsig is blockaded, that my brother of Prussia is there very ill; the King is at Torgau; imagine my anxieties and my sufferings; I am scarcely in a fit state to finish this letter. I tremble for the King and dread lest he should take some violent measure. Adieu, wish for me death, it is the best thing that can happen to me.

"WILHELMINA."

No wonder, after reading this recital of woes, that Voltaire wrote to Tronchin that she was dying! But, overwhelmed as the Margravine was, she did not for a moment cease in her endeavours for peace. France, she heard from a very zealous agent there, wanted peace for the finances and Navy, and did not cling to the Netherlands, which would continue the war. France only wanted two things, a treaty of revenge

with England, to play guarantor of the Peace of Westphalia, and to make Germany at one with the Empire, and that they were dragging on so as not to ruin Frederic. Will he not try, she wrote, the mediation of Denmark? The Vienna demands may possibly, she hears, cause a rupture. A courier just come from Paris brought word that Bernis suggested that Frederic should deal directly with the French Ministry, and not through thirty different channels, if he wanted peace. Mirabeau was of the same opinion. Otherwise the King would lose his allies, without securing France. The Margrave of Baireuth also was very depressed over the trend of affairs.

Frederic wrote that "fate was not relenting, every news I receive, every letter I open, aggravate my misfortune. In fact, my dear sister, fate or a devil have resolved upon the fall of the King of Prussia." He hardly knew how to write to her. His letters are scribbles. But he took the Margravine's view of the conduct of the French. He had tried, as she suggested, to negotiate through Denmark, but had been refused. All the doors closed, and he thought she would see that any idea of negotiating must be given up; he was being hard pressed and "must expect even worse catastrophes between now and December."

And, indeed, he had the day before received an express to say that 15,000 Austrians under Haddick were off on a flying column to summons defenceless Berlin. The news of the danger threatening her old home filled the Margravine with terror. From Frederic's answer to Voltaire in verse, and the vow to him "to live and die as King," she felt sure that his immortality, at least, was safe. Suicide might have been averted, but not death. The whirlwind was now devastating her native land and her family.

"Death and a thousand torments could not equal the awful state in which I am," she wrote to Frederic two days before the latter posted off after Haddick. "Reports run about which make me

tremble. They say that you are dangerously wounded, or else ill. Vainly I torment myself to get news of you and I can't get any. Oh! my dear brother, whatever may happen to you, I shall not survive you! If I remain in the cruel uncertainty in which I am I shall succumb to it, and I shall be happy. I was on the point of sending off a courier, but I did not dare. For God's sake have a line written to me. I do not know what I have written, my heart is torn, and I feel that anxiety and alarm are turning my head. Oh! dear, beloved brother! Have pity on me! Please heaven I may be mistaken, and that you may scold me, but the least thing concerning you goes to my heart and alarms my love too much. May I perish a thousand times if only you live and are happy. I can say no more, grief stifles me, and I can only assure you that your fate will be mine."

The Margravine sent on to Voltaire the King's heroic verses, his reply to the "patriarch's exhortations," "at which I laughed." But Wilhelmina was nearer tears than mirth. She pours herself out, so overwhelmed that she writes "we" for "I"—quite merged in Frederic now.

"Overwhelmed with trouble of mind and body, I can only write you a little letter. You will find one enclosed which will reward you a hundredfold for my brevity. Our situation is unaltered. A tomb is our horizon. Though everything seems lost, yet things are left us which no one can take away; it is courage, and the feelings of our heart. Rest assured of our gratitude, and of all the feelings which you deserve for your devotion and your mental aspect, worthy of a true philosopher.

"WILHELMINA."

In her agitation and desperate desire to do something to avert Frederic's ruin, the Margravine seems at this moment to have actually considered a wild and impossible scheme. We have seen her desirous of braving the tumults of war to reach her brother and dissuade him from suicide. She now wished to undertake a journey to the French capital, and herself to secure for him a peace which seemed hitherto to have evaded her pursuit, a peace which alone could save him from annihilation. But, of course, any such journey was out of the question.

"I shall be surprised," wrote Voltaire to Tronchin, "if Madame de Baireuth goes to Paris; she was dying a fortnight ago, and I doubt if she can and will undertake the journey. What she has written, and what the King, her brother, has written, is so strange and odd that one could not believe it, and I do not believe it myself, so will not say anything for fear of making mischief."

How interesting to posterity would have been this trip to Paris had the Margravine been able to make it! Wilhelmina, at the Court of Louis XV., in her element in its glare and glitter, out of her element with the Pompadour and that ilk, describing Versailles and the gardens and touching off the various actors on the stage in her most inimitable manner. She would have been a match, with her riper experience, for the intriguers, and Frederic would have benefited. But, as Voltaire had once said, she had everything but health. That was lacking.

In cypher the Margravine succeeded in getting through a few undated lines to Frederic, begging him not to despair or to precipitate the misfortunes for the State and the family. *Viâ* Prince Conti she hears that Paris utterly declined to negotiate secretly, disapproving of these methods. Again she tries to break down Frederic's stubborn pride. She shows him how, having made a treaty with England, at least he could now show his friendship for France, and implores him for all their sakes to make this slight sacrifice and to sue. The conditions might not be so hard, and suppose he made a mistake! He has done enough to show his glory. In his extremity others have sued. England will not let Denmark mediate and amuses France at Frederic's expense: she will ruin him and reap the fruits of his misfortunes. He will be the victim of a false and useless ally, who is doing nothing for him. She implores him to show to Europe that he is not ambitious, but only wants peace. As for France, she writes, the Pompadour had disappeared from the Ministry and thought only of spending money. Bernis

was nice, a philosopher, honest, courageous, and modern, working for finance, commerce, and the country.

Voltaire was busy on behalf of the brother and sister, whose state of mind seems to have staggered even him. He wrote to his friend at Lyons that, "as a man very much attached to that Princess," he had suggested to Frederic to make overtures to the Court of France. It would be a glorious *rôle* for Louis—Frederic must be a little punished—lose Silesia and some of Pomerania —the Peace of Westphalia must be renewed. Voltaire was quite in his old diplomatic mood of seventeen years before. To flattery of the French King he added that of the once omnipotent Cardinal, Tençin, the Margravine's old acquaintance of the Lyons days, now living in retreat.

"It seemed to me that Mde. la Margrave has a particular liking for an estimable man (Tençin) you often see. I fancy if she were to write the King a touching and convincing letter and send it through that person, who would back it up by his influence and advice,"

that France might pose as arbiter-in-chief, and that Tençin, the instrument, might become head of a Congress which would settle the affairs of Europe.

On receiving this letter the banker went and interviewed the Cardinal at his country seat. On hearing of the project His Eminence did not consider it a dream. Evidently he had agreeable recollections of the Margravine and her ability. He dictated a letter to Tronchin for Voltaire, saying that "the plan was admirable, that he adopted it in its entirety, except that he would not put himself at the head of the negotiation. But he would take charge of the Margravine's letter, which would doubtless come through Voltaire, and would advise her adding the latter's wise remarks on the aggrandisement of Austria, and some flattery of Bernis.

Meanwhile, Frederic, on his first steps of the march

to succour Berlin, had written, "though tired as a dog," to comfort Wilhelmina, preaching patience and philosophy, and imploring her to calm herself, and even if he was unable to write for six weeks, not to believe all the Austrian news. The same day he wrote again, having meanwhile received her imploring letter begging him to send an envoy with full powers to Paris. It was only a proud refusal. "No crown, my dear sister, is worth a mean action." He leaves the French, so proud, to their aberrations, and is on the march to change the face of destiny between now and December. "As for the French, they will not hear my name mentioned, but I reckon, nevertheless, to speak to them in such a guise by actions that they will regret, when too late, their impatience and pride."

Wilhelmina revived in spirit; now she knew him safe she was happy. She wrote on October 22nd a bantering, metaphorical letter in her old style. He is off with an increased army to do great things. If he requires Austrian news, she suggests, as Count Grün had paid a visit to Baireuth, his sending two discreet men to d'Adhémar, who is evincing great fidelity. But she tells the Margrave nothing, so as not to compromise him. He is faithful to death to the King, but he cannot ruin his country for no purpose.

In the meantime Voltaire had discovered that other negotiations were going on with France—Frederic himself working with Richelieu. But that did not hinder him from pressing his own efforts on his behalf. He wrote to the Duke of Richelieu to ask if he had received his letter in August, as to Mde. de Baireuth negotiating through him, and added that "they persist in their first resolve and will execute it if driven to extremities." He informed Tronchin that he had received two very strange long letters, and that he was to impart them to the Cardinal. "They are embittered by misfortune," he wrote of Frederic and the Margravine, "they say they would risk any humiliation about what they pro-

pose. They seem really determined to terrible decisions." And again:

"the people of whom I spoke in my last letter seem to me still in great despair, and boast of extreme resolves . . . shall only have news of the principal personages in a month. They have been so preoccupied that they have made a mistake in sealing up, and have sent me one letter for another. This mistake makes me think that their mind is not very clear."

Time seemed long and weary to Wilhelmina while Frederic was marching Berlin-wards. She passed a sad fortnight, eating her bread with tears, without any letters from him, and all the lines of communication were barred. She was in great distress of mind about her family and her country. Haddick's occupation of Berlin roused her to wrath. Had the Berlin women, she wrote, shared her anger, they would have resisted him themselves like tigresses. By this time, however, she trusted that Frederic would have avenged this insult. More hopeful for the future, but very anxious about him personally, and for his health during the fatigues of the march, was this "old sister," who had been attached to him since his childhood, and who loved him more than herself.

CHAPTER V

WILHELMINA THE PEACEMAKER

The revulsion of Rosbach.—Wilhelmina renews her peace efforts.—Another military letter to Voltaire.—The Margravine writes to the great Cardinal.—Stress in Baireuth.—The news of Leuthen.—The grinding of Baireuth.—"Breathing Peace."—A Family worry.—The Margravine writes to King Louis.—Her Leuthen letter to Voltaire.—New Year's hopes and fears.—Peace pros and cons.—A letter of the Pandours.—Depressing news.—The failure of Tençin.—Pin-pricks.—The harrying of Baireuth.—Help from Prussia.—Frederic soothes.

The "divine and loving sister, who vouchsafes to be interested in the fate of a brother who adores you, deign to participate in my joy," as Frederic wrote in hot haste immediately after the battle of Rosbach, fought on November 5th, seems to have been aware on the 6th that it had taken place. Frederic could not make out how that came to pass. "I believe, my dear sister, that it must be your superior mind that makes you guess events." Nowadays, we should explain it by telepathy. If ever two spirits should have been in telepathic communication, surely it was these.

But Haddick's descent on Berlin was only a small affair, not backed up either by the Austrian, French, or Swedes. The capital *en était quitte pour la peur*, and a ransom, while the Royal family got off with a short stay in Spandau. The French Imperialists, emboldened by Frederic's departure towards Berlin, advanced as far

as Leipsig. But, when the King turned, and came back there again, at the end of October, they retired. He went off to meet them across the Saale, and on November 5th he wrote a triumphant letter to his kind, divine, and affectionate sister that he had that day completely beaten the "coopers," with their "circles," at Rosbach. He could now die in peace; "We may be unhappy, but we are not dishonoured."

Wilhelmina was soothed and satisfied, but one misses in her letter after Rosbach the exuberant joy with which the brother's victories in earlier years had filled her. Indeed, for her, the clouds were lightening too late. She had been too crushed by the sorrows of the last two months to easily spring up again. The buoyancy of youth and health was no longer hers. The acute tension once relaxed, she collapsed and fell ill. Thus it comes about that her congratulatory letter opens with the pessimistic remark that anxieties and cares must always in her case follow any subjects of satisfaction. Frederic was already on his hurried march to Silesia to account for the Austrians as he had done for the French, and she was full of personal apprehensions for him. The fact that her brother Henry had been wounded at Rosbach naturally increased her fears. Her surroundings did not conduce to cheerfulness either, for the condition of the Franconian Circle had not been alleviated by the victory. It swarmed with deserters flying from the broken Imperial Army, who were caught and shot. The Margraves of Baireuth and Anspach were working together to spare them. The details from the Margravine, almost at first hand, of the decimation of some of the regiments, of which the remains had wandered into Baireuth territory, give an idea of how great the victory had been.

Not content with having paved the way for negotiations through Cardinal Tençin, who, as we have seen, had some weeks ago expressed himself ready to forward a letter of the Margravine's to the French King, Wilhel-

mina continued to send her brother, on his march, news in cypher from Paris, culled from Mirabeau, who sent her several letters. Frederic dispatched her cypher scribbles as best he could. The King of France, she said, only wanted to be friends, but could not reply to unauthorised overtures, nor could he break the Treaty of Vienna. As a guarantor of the Treaty of Westphalia he must demand the restoration of Saxony before he could make peace. After that there were plenty of causes of disagreement between Paris and Vienna which would lead the former to return to the old alliance. But, if only negotiations were set on foot, the indemnification of Saxony might come down a quarter in consequence of Rosbach. France only wanted some arrangement to wriggle out of the Austrian Treaty with honour, and to help Prussia. She begged Frederic to think the matter over, and also to send her instructions as to how to proceed with Voltaire, now that the road lay open in that direction. Mirabeau's last letter said that, if the King of Prussia would but make a start, all would go well, and the Margravine was considered in that quarter as good a medium for the negotiations as she was at Lyons.

The stand against Frederic at this moment, the Margravine wrote, was the result of pressure of the King of Poland and Saxony on the Empress. If she declined to fight any more, he would have to conclude peace with Prussia. His view was, in fact, the same as that of France. On the other side, Poland was angry with its King, and with the Russians, and threatened rebellion. Augustus would perhaps take Saxony back with an indemnity, and the Margravine was well informed that, if Frederic declared at the Diet that he would restore Saxony, on France, the Empire and Sweden guaranteeing his own States, a glorious peace would come as the result of his generosity. The troubles of Germany would be at an end, and France would have to throw down the mask before all Europe.

They had been warned at Baireuth that the Empress was mobilising all the available troops of the Empire on the first news of the disaster at Rosbach. In the two Bishoprics even the boys were being enrolled, but the two Margraves were working together to prevent an attack on Nuremberg, though the Margravine feared they would not succeed. Saxony would be called upon to send its contingent, and she suggested to Frederic to seize it.

Frederic sent the Margravine a detailed account of the operations which culminated in Rosbach. But, even before she received it, she culled at first hand from eye-witnesses a description of the battle, and sent, towards the end of November, another of her clever, succinct military letters to Voltaire.

"My body has succumbed to the agitation of my mind, which has prevented me replying to you. I will entertain you to-day with far more interesting news than any about my own self. I had told you that the allied army blockaded Leipsig; I go on with my story. On the 26th the King threw himself into the town with a corps of ten thousand men; Marshal Keith had already entered it with a similar number; there had been a very lively skirmish between the Austrians of the Imperial forces and the Prussians; the latter had all the best of it and took five hundred Austrians. The allied army retired on Merseburg; it burnt the bridge of that town and that of Weissenfels, and that of Halle had already been destroyed. They say that this sudden retreat was caused by the urgent representations of the Queen of Poland, who foresaw, and not without reason, the total ruin of Leipsig, if it was besieged. The plan of the French was to make themselves masters of the Saale. The King marched on Merseburg, where he fell on the French rearguard, and took five hundred French prisoners. The Austrians who had been taken in the skirmish before Leipsig had been shut up in an old castle on the walls of the town. They were obliged to give up their quarters to the five hundred French, because they were more comfortable, and were put in the House of Correction.

"It is in order to show you the attentions shown to your nation that I inform you of these trifles. Marshal Keith marched on Halle, where he put up the bridge again. The King, having no pontoons, made use of trestles on which planks were laid, and by that means restored the two bridges of Merseburg and Weissenfels. The column he commanded reunited with that of Marshal Keith at Bornerode. The latter had added to his column eight thousand men commanded by Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick. On the 4th reconnaissances were

made of the enemy, who was encamped on the heights of St. Micheln; the position being impregnable, the King pitched his camp at Rosbach in a plain. He had a hill at his back with a very gentle slope. On the 5th, while the King was dining quietly with his generals, two patrols came to warn him that the enemy was making a movement to the left. The King rose from table; the cavalry, which was out foraging, was recalled; they remained quiet, thinking the enemy was marching on Freiburg—a little town at their rear; but they saw that he was firing on the Prussian left. On which the King had the camp struck, and defiled by the left on this hill, at the gallop, the infantry as well as the cavalry. This manœuvre, according to all appearance, was made in order to score off the French. Immediately, as if by the sound of a whistle, this army, all in confusion, was ranged in line of battle.

Then the artillery opened such a terrible fire that the French to whom I have spoken say that every shot killed or wounded eight or nine people. The musketry fire was not less effective. The French were still advancing in column in order to attack with the bayonet. They were not a hundred feet off the Prussians when the Prussian cavalry, wheeling, fell upon their flank with an incredible fury. The French were overthrown and put to flight. The infantry, attacked on the flank, battered down by the cannon, charged by six battalions and the regiment of *gens d'armes*, was cut in pieces and entirely dispersed.

Prince Henry, who commanded on the King's left, had the largest share in this victory, in which he received a slight wound. The losses of the French are very great. Besides five thousand prisoners, and more than three hundred officers taken in this battle, they lost nearly all the artillery. Moreover, I inform you what I have learnt from the mouth of fugitives and some reports of Prussian officers. The King has only had time to inform me of his victory, and has not been able to send me an account of it. The King picks out and cares for the French officers as he would for his own. He has had the wounded dressed in his presence, and has given most precise orders that they should lack nothing. After having followed the enemy to Spielberg, he returned to Leipsig, from whence he started off again on the 10th to march on Torgau. The Commander-in-chief of the Austrians made as if he would enter Brandenburg with thirteen or fourteen thousand men; at the approach of the Prussians, this column retreated to Bautzen, in Lusatia. The King is pursuing it to attack it if he can. Unfortunately, we have heard to-day of the fall of Schweidnitz, which capitulated on the 13th, after having sustained an assault, which makes me again a prey to intense anxiety."

And no wonder. Communication with the King was very difficult, and she was still unsuccessful in

bending his stubborn pride to an opening towards peace. The "French stiffness," he wrote, had obliged him to knit himself more closely with England. She continued to Voltaire.

"Deafness is becoming an epidemic disease in France. If I dared I would add that blindness is added to it. I could tell you many things by word of mouth which I cannot confide to the pen, by which you would be convinced of the good intentions which people have had. They have them still. I will write at the first opportunity to the Cardinal. Assure him, I beg of you, of my entire esteem, and tell him that I am still persisting in my Lyons plan, but that I much wish many people were of his way of thinking, in which case we should soon agree. I am very mad to mix myself up in politics. My mind is not good for anything more than to be put into the hospital. You force me to make efforts as much mental as physical to write such a long letter. I can only give you the pleasure of narratives. I must make the best I can of it, not being able to give you any better, and such as my gratitude wishes them to be. Many compliments to Mde. Denis, and remember that you have no better friend than

"WILHELMINA."

A short line from Frederic on the 24th acquainted her with the battle of Breslau, and the change of fortune in a month, almost unprecedented. A few days later he ate his words; the Austrians were not turned out of Silesia yet, though he promised her no renewed visits that year of Soubise and Hilburghausen in her regions, and he implored her to be patient. "May Heaven prolong your days and give you the calmness of mind so necessary in these sad circumstances."

The Margravine hastened to send on the news to Voltaire. In six months she wrote to him that she did not think there would be a single Frenchman left in Germany. He thought her schemes pleasanter than her prophecies. "She only breathes peace."

She sent the King on Voltaire's congratulatory epistle on Rosbach, which was a long time reaching him. But the state of her own Baireuth was alone enough to depress anyone.

"We have four thousand hares, or fugitives, of the Army of the Empire encamped in the country. They are so many starving wolves, who may easily pass their hunger on to us. These poor people have been eight days without provisions, drinking stagnant water and sleeping *à la belle étoile*; they are being thus prepared to march into action. The French are a little better off, but they also have no food. Germany is not made for French armies; we saw that in the last war, and it will be so again in this. I wish the Austrians might have their losses and their sufferings. I have a scrap of affection for them, which prevents me from wishing them evil. Continue to give me your news. Your letters are my only recreation."

For once she omitted to end with compliments to the "insatiable niece." Voltaire was flattered by that little courtesy, and wrote to D'Argental shortly after, that, while the King of Prussia had never mentioned her, or apologised to her, "Madame la Margrave de Baireuth has been much more attentive."

Through Voltaire she now sent her preliminary letter for the great Cardinal, a merely complimentary one, full of conventionalities, astutely intended to induce her old acquaintance to forward her plan. She was full of gratitude to the Cardinal, writes Voltaire. "I wish her brother would give himself up to her advice."

To this sad and unpleasant state of affairs within the principality was added a new alarm of danger without. Prince Hildburghausen had collected the remnants of the "miserable Army" of the Empire to the amount "of thirteen or fourteen thousand men," wrote the Margravine, "and was drawing a cordon from Coburg to Hof," on her very borders. She begged that Mayer's corps, which had done such good work in the summer, should again be sent "to rid you of all this horde," "We are being persecuted afresh to give our troops. The sooner the blow is given the better, as panic still reigns."

But Baireuth this time had to wait till matters were settled on the Silesian side. Frederic wrote in reply:

"In another week our business will be concluded." Nor would he give leave for the Margravine to begin any negotiations till the campaign was ended; it might last a month; then she might instil proposals for peace into the French.

Wilhelmina's agony increased with the tension, waiting, in ignorance of his whereabouts, on the King's success in Silesia, and even suggesting a combination of England and Turkey to deliver him. On December 7th she scribbled him a short, anxious note that she would not survive the ruin of her family. Wilhelmina's nerves could hardly any longer stand the strain. But the very same day that she wrote in the depths of despair, the news reached her of the victory of Leuthen, a victory which set the bells pealing and the cannon firing in England, the finest battle of that century. "The fifth days of the month are lucky for him," wrote Voltaire.

She who would not have survived him sent Frederic her tender congratulations the moment of receiving his little note, dated the very day of the victory. Dusk had fallen ere the battle ended, and it was dark December night ere the King rode, poorly escorted, into the Schloss at Lissa, the Austrian officers, who might so easily have taken him, turning out to make room. He must have penned the note to Wilhelmina there, at the close of the memorable day which had begun for him long before dawn.

If the victory of Merseburg (Rosbach) was dear to him, Wilhelmina wrote, Leuthen gave her all the pleasures of vengeance. Reviving with the news, she waxes classical, quite in her old style. If she had a "scrap of love" for the French, she has more than her share of hatred for his "implacable enemies," the Austrians. If only Keith can take Prague, she will go mad with joy. She adds little items about Rosbach, and bits of pleasant flattery—that Voltaire was writing Frederic's history, and implored detailed accounts of the campaign, that in

France Frederic was looked up to as a demi-god, and concluded with a pretty little story she heard from a Polish officer who served with the French, and which the Duke de Crillon quotes in his Memoirs, abrogating the point to himself. The day before the battle the King, being seen reconnoitring the enemy's camp from a hill, the captain of a battery wished to fire upon him. But the Prince de Soubise having come up, prevented it by saying that the King's person was sacred.

Three days after the battle came the letter from the King telling her that "the false news I had given you is now, thank God, true," and describing the overthrow of Austria.

"My dear, my kind, my adorable sister, be quiet at present, we shall have peace in the month of March, and I have now hope of seeing you again, of embracing you, and of showing you all the gratitude with which my heart is full, and which I shall retain till my last breath of life."

When down in the depths of despair he had "longed passionately to see her," now, in the heights of exultation, it is pathetic to read how he conjures his dear, his charming sister to preserve her days. "The only comfort, the only hope left in me is to embrace you before I die."

The victory of Leuthen, the fall of Breslau, did not really mend matters in the Franconian Circle, as the Margravine's letters show. The heel of the Empress was grinding the recalcitrant principality with "Execution" troops. Frederic, indeed, writes begging her to calm herself, and to concentrate her tender affections on preserving for him "my only treasure, your precious self. I have the happiness of possessing in you a friend who is without equal, I feel and know its value." But it was difficult for the Margravine to receive even such letters. Never had she and her friends and allies been so near punishment as traitors. But for the King's letters she would not have heard the

news of his victory ; even the newspapers were stopped, and the ubiquitous Pandours pounced upon the official letters of the Berlin Ministry. At Hof the Prussian Privy Councillor, Osten, was under suspicion, as a plan of the frontier fortress of Eger had been found on him, and more than thirty people who consorted with him had been arrested. Even one of the Margravine's footmen was in fear of his life, and dared not leave the town. "Under the rose preparations are being made here to march the Circle troops into Saxony," she writes ; ". . . we have the 'execution,' our troops will march, but nevertheless the execution is not removed. But for the ministers' timidity, it (the marching) would never have been agreed to." She begged Frederic to make use of the Baireuth contingent when it did go. "The officers, if they can, will allow themselves to be captured. The cavalry is not mounted, it will follow. If you release the deserters and prisoners, my dear brother, it will only have to begin over again. You can make servants of the peasants, they will be only too glad. . . . I will let you know at Leipsig, directly they start."

She warned Frederic that the ban of the Empire would be shortly pronounced against him, a ban as effective, she wrote, as the Papal excommunication. She sent rumours of secret tamperings by means of a Jew with a governor of Schweidnitz, the only place left now to the Empress in Silesia. How she wished Frederic would fall on the enemy and hunt them quite out of Silesia and Bohemia ! There was again a rumour that the new Sultan would attack Austria in Hungary or Russia, in which case the Margravine laughingly wrote that she would willingly reward him by furnishing his harem with ballet dancers ! Vienna was working by gold and fraud against the enemy it could not destroy by force. The Pompadour was abetting the French Ministry, and the Margravine thought that any concerted negotiations with England for peace should go through Bernis only. But she heard from Mirabeau that at Paris "only your

praises are sung, and there is not the slightest animosity over your victory."

The next day another unsigned cypher was dispatched to brave the Pandours. The approach of a Prussian force under Keith—the Margravine's acquaintance when in command of the passing Russian troops so many years before—had brought about drastic measures on the part of the enemy. Osten had been arrested on his estate, and led in chains to Eger, and his papers and the King's money taken. The Margravine had rescued, and was nursing, a Prussian officer of the Guards. She was collecting all deserters and enrolling them, and begged for their pardons to be sent. No letters could get through, and the principality was still in the dark about the victory.

Baireuth felt the recoil of Leuthen. The Margrave and Margravine were "for the moment prisoners." She wrote to the King that "the people you have beaten have seized all our towns, and had the keys given up," and were forcing the Margrave to send troops to the Austrian Army. But she hoped to avoid it when it came to starting, or to arrange that they deserted to Frederic for service during the war, and added that they were good ones and worth having.

From the irate Voltaire, incensed that his letters were stolen, and his adorable Princess inconvenienced, we learn that "all Franconia is now inundated with troops. It seems that they must go and eat up that district now, after having devoured the others. It is with difficulty that letters from Baireuth reach me as they do. . . . The Prince of Hildburghausen . . . he prowls around Baireuth."

News had reached her from Paris that the Dauphiness was imploring Louis to make peace between Prussia and Saxony, which was almost ruined beyond the repair of any indemnity. The Pompadour was, of course, against the Ministry in this, and Bernis had to walk delicately with her. From French insinuations the Margravine

sketched out a scheme of giving back Saxony, but retaining some fortresses, in which case the French and Swedes would withdraw their troops, and Frederic, helped by England, would have only to fight Austria, to whom France would only give the twenty-four thousand men promised in the original treaty.

On Christmas Eve the Cardinal's reply to the Margravine's opening letter was sent on by Voltaire through a safe channel. Wilhelmina's hopes for peace ran high. "She only breathes peace," writes Voltaire. In a cypher to Frederic towards the close of the year, she sent him special news from Paris, by the same hand, Mirabeau probably, though she mentions no name, who had given her hints, she writes, since September, and who was *au courant*. All good Frenchmen and D'Estrées were for Frederic, but the Pompadour was his "mortal enemy." The Empress feared peace as much as the French Ministry desired it, and she did not scruple to use any intrigues to foment her allies against Prussia. But again the Margravine reiterates that some accredited agent must be sent to open negotiations with France, and that it was necessary to *ménager* this all-powerful mistress, or she would put a spoke in the wheel. Her interests lay in the direction of peace, but the Empress wrote by every post, called the Pompadour "*ma chère amie*," and the latter replied, "*ma belle reine*." The Margravine warned Frederic that she heard that in all the anti-Austrian Courts of the Empire the Princes were implored by the French to stand up for their rights, as Anspach and Baireuth had done. The only fear was that, if the King delayed to begin negotiations, they would unite more closely and make arrangements which would ruin him. Verily and indeed the politics of the German Empire were involved at this moment!

On the top of the military and political troubles of her country, the Margravine had again family worries in the shape of her antagonistic son-in-law. A story

had got about that the Duke of Würtemberg was thinking of a divorce. The Margrave, his wife wrote, was about to arrest the promulgator of the rumour, till he could obtain a direct reply from the Duke, and her daughter's fate be decided. She evidently wished the King to take cognisance of the Duke's intention, and to interfere on behalf of his niece.

On December 27th the Margravine sent through Voltaire a letter to the "*Chapeau Rouge. Pour les coquineries il n'y a point, pour les douceurs, je n'y réponds pas.*" In it was enclosed a letter for King Louis, and, with it, she sent to Voltaire another of those military letters which would have done honour to any soldier or statesman. But she begins in her old witty way :

"If my heart gave itself up to the suggestions of my mind, you would receive news from me by every post. I am, you say, as eccentric as you are—yet I write. To which I reply to you that there is only one Voltaire in the world, and that he must not judge others by himself. How I chatter! I see how impatient you are to hear things which interest you. A battle won; Breslau in the power of the King; thirty-three thousand prisoners, seven hundred officers and fourteen generals taken, besides a hundred and fifty guns, four thousand waggons, provisions, baggage and ammunition; is the news I can give you. It is not finished yet. Four thousand dead lay on the field of battle, four thousand wounded found themselves in Breslau, and four thousand five hundred deserters are counted. You may be sure that it is a fact, not only corroborated by the King and the whole Army, but even by a crowd of Austrian deserters who have been here. The Prussians have five hundred dead and four thousand wounded. The action is unique and appears fabulous. The Austrians were eighty thousand strong, the Prussians only thirty-six thousand. The victory was fought out, but only lasted four hours. I cannot contain myself with joy at this prodigious change of fortune. I must add detail. The column commanded by the King had done forty-two German miles in fifteen days, and had but one day to rest themselves, before fighting this memorable battle. The King may say, like Caesar: 'I came, I saw, I conquered.' He informs me that at this moment he is only concerned how to feed and stow this enormous number of prisoners. The letter which you wrote him, in which you asked him for an account of the battle of Merseburg, has been intercepted with mine. Happily there was nothing in it which could do you any harm. . . .

Three days ago we had three shocks of earthquake four miles off. They say that the first was so strong that underground noises were heard. It did not cause any damage. There is no precedent for such a phenomenon in this country; I leave you to find out the reason for it. Many compliments to Mde. Denis. Be assured of my entire esteem.

"WILHELMINA."

At the close of 1757 came a warm letter from the "old brother," with sincere vows for the renewing of the year, in which he hoped "to have only good news to give her." He enclosed a new cypher, "the scribble of the Sybil, for which you have asked," to further circumvent the pillaging Pandours.

The New Year's letter to Voltaire of the Margravine, who "will be all my life the true friend of *mon frère Suisse*," is dated: "January 2nd, 1758, for, thank Heaven, we have finished the most fatal of years." Did she realise that the one just begun was to be to her the most fatal of all? One cannot but think that she knew how frail and precarious her life was. For while wishing her friend every happiness, she "abandons her lot to destiny. One often forms wishes which would be bad for us if they were fulfilled, therefore I make no more. If one thing in the world could satisfy my desires, it is peace." She was philosophical, as of old, when writing to her *Frère Suisse*, and pessimistic. Laughing with Democrites at human folly, she shrugs her shoulders at the vain pursuers of fame and glory, at the hypocrite Maria Theresa walking in procession and worshipping the saints, while she embroils and decimates Europe; at the philosopher Frederic, who, though regretfully, sheds streams of blood; at the avaricious nation, England, sworn to ruin humanity in order to accumulate wealth. Then she returns to her all-absorbing subject, and to Voltaire's delicate suggestions, and encloses another letter for the Cardinal. Things were not going as she would like. Mirabeau wrote to Voltaire that "they think as you do that peace must be made. The King of Prussia wishes it,

it seems. I would like to tell you the obstacles that I foresee, but her Royal Highness's orders oblige me to put off my ideas till another post . . . I can assure you that you are forgotten neither in the successes nor in the triumphs." The Margravine herself wrote: "I think like you about the war, have a third who certainly thinks like us . . . he wishes for peace, but there are many 'buts,'" and she ends by lashing out against the King's enemies and the persecutions he is enduring, Orpheus-like, at the hands of the three women, but who hate, instead of loving him. It is extraordinary how her devotion to Frederic seems absolutely to have obscured any perception of political failing in him. Though advanced and modern, liberal in her political and religious views, Wilhelmina fervently believed with the hottest of Tories that "the King can do no wrong."

His recent astounding victories had restored the balance, and placed peace negotiations on a different footing to that on which the Margravine had started. France wanted peace indeed, but had her ally, Austria, to consider, and Frederic, though he did not like the English, had to consider his. Voltaire's view was that only general exhaustion could bring matters to the longed-for consummation. A marc's nest in Paris brought to the notice of Frederic by the Margravine at this time helped matters. It was a reputed treaty between Prussia and France to attack Hanover, which was utterly denied by Frederic when he got wind of it.

She wrote hopefully to the King that Count Finckenstein would be the *persona grata* to send when the negotiations got as far, that Austria had no idea of ceding the Netherlands, and that the French were fortifying Dunkirk, but "demand neither war nor conquest, the kingdom is depopulated, confusion is everywhere, commerce is suffering, and they only want to get things straight. . . But one of the King's grievances is that you did not write to him 'my dear brother,' on the occasion of his attempted assassination, which the King

of England did. He took it for a mark of hatred. The news of the battle of the 22nd (the loss of Breslau) consternated all the Ministry, especially Bernis, which is a mark they do not want you to lose Silesia. They did not know about your other victory when the man left."

Feelingly and affectionately wrote the King from Breslau, where he had settled for the winter, a New Year's letter—"for the love of God, my dearest sister, take care of your health and preserve your days for a brother who adores you," but it was "physically impossible" for him at present to alleviate the enemy's pressure on Baireuth. We have seen how the Margravine's couriers had been stopped and her letters to the King seized and stolen by the roving Hussars, or Pandours. In the delicate circumstances of the present negotiations the Margravine took steps to prevent a recurrence of the thefts. The "Letters of the Pandours" now began between her and Voltaire. She called herself *Sœur Mézetin*, Voltaire was *le Frère Suisse*, and the peace negotiations were referred to as an Italian comedy.

"Why do you call us villains? We pillage, we sack, we are licensed thieves, it is true. Are we, therefore, more to be blamed than those who rule the world, than authors who steal others' thoughts, and than the Saints of Paradise, who appropriate the goods of nations or of private people in order to found churches and convents. Certainly not. Do give us more justice, and, instead of abusing us, wish that the sovereigns of Europe would in future follow our example, that they might become as voracious as we are to get your letters, that they might learn, by reading them, to become philosophers and virtuous Pandours. If ever we have the happiness of catching you, we will try and pillage your mind and your knowledge, in order to revenge ourselves for your contempt. Our Rosinantes would then be metamorphosed into a Pegasus, and with the help of a certain lady, who is called Reason, we should know how to prevent you making 'novenas' against us. Adieu."

After this little banter, in quite the old style of happier days, Wilhelmina gives the kernel of her letter, woman-like, in the *P.S.*

"I have received all your letters and I reply to them all at once. The plan of the Italian comedy is not quite straight. But it would ill become me to criticise your works. The Sister of Mézetin dare not mix herself up in what does not concern her, and, besides, it is very dangerous to undertake to play the comedy, as one runs the risk of being carried off by the Pandours, or having the parts intercepted. For more than four weeks I have had no news at all of the King. It is possible he may have written, which I certainly believe, but I think his letters have perhaps taken roads which do not lead here. They say that the French have received a slight check at Bremen, and that seven thousand men have been beaten. The Swedes are at the worst in Pomerania. Their cavalry has retired into the Island of Rügen. The infantry is at Stralsund, where it has been bottled up, and will be bombarded. That is all I know. My brother of Prussia has sent me this letter for you. You can see by the date how regularly letters reach here. I pity your blindness only to believe in God and to deny J——. How will you manage to plead your case? If anything could amuse me any longer, it would be to see your apology. Adieu, give me, I beg you, news, and especially that of my lover. Would to Heaven that they were good!

"WILHELMINA.

"I have forgotten to say that it is I who am the Pandour. I made a mistake and sent a blank sheet to the King instead of your letter, which I have found again. I have started it off again. If it reaches a safe haven you will soon have a reply."

This shows how great the Margravine's perturbation and distress of mind during those terrible few weeks when the tide of war had overflowed both her present home and her native land, and when even Frederic's letters had failed. It is consolatory to think, as one little line among all the banter and the metaphor shows, that, in this dire distress, when she felt again her bodily strength decaying, when the philosophy Voltaire had instilled had proved a broken reed, her thoughts were turning to higher help.

The early part of the New Year brought a little lull of anxiety both to the brother and sister. While Frederic had guests and some entertaining at Breslau, the Margrave had some music and a little society at Baireuth. In a letter he sent her through Prince Henry, who was quartered at Leipsig, Frederic says how

pleased he is, especially about the music, the comforter of the old days of trouble of their youth.

"In spite of the Hussars of Hildburghausen," wrote Voltaire to Tronchin on January 17th, "here is another letter, and measures are taken," he adds, with a coarse joke, "not to have this little love affair interrupted." Communication was really easier for the Margravine with Switzerland than with Silesia, for one of her cyphers had been found out and Vienna had received news from Mirabeau thereby, which laid more than one person under dangerous suspicion. Prince Henry at Leipsig was the medium between Baireuth and Breslau, and his *chasseurs* seem to have got safely through to the King, not one letter of the Margravine's missing. It would indeed have been a loss to Frederic to miss any from "my only comfort. What a pleasure to receive your letters! They are balms which heal all the wounds my enemies inflict." Things did not look very bright for the Circle. Towards the end of January the Margravine was able to warn the King that the French were going to send troops into Würzburg and Bamberg, and that the Protestant regiments were being kept on the move to prevent their disbandment, and were eventually to be taken into Bohemia, but the time was to be kept secret.

Early in February the King wrote to his sister that the war would certainly last all this year. That the news was very damping and depressing to her, her letters show. Wilhelmina's health always flagged towards the end of the trying German winter, and her spirits now sank too. Frederic begs her to "disperse those gloomy ideas and to liven up your spirits as soon as possible. Consider, oh! my dear sister, that your love is all my comfort and what I should lose in losing you." But his news was far from reassuring. The Turkish diversion was not to be counted on; the Russians were swarming over Prussia, but there were no Tartars amongst them, and they behaved better

than the French. Specially depressing to her after all her toil must have been his remarks that the desire of France for peace was shown chiefly by her fresh efforts against him. Wilhelmina was always too sanguine. Cardinal de Tençin indeed was well-intentioned, but he no longer had any real power. He did write a letter to the King, sending that of the Margravine for Louis. "It was impossible to write with more dignity, more wisdom, nor with a better intention," wrote Voltaire, to whom his Eminence sent a copy. But, alas! it bore no fruit. All the labour and pains of the last three months, Wilhelmina's wiles, and Voltaire's flattery and astuteness were wasted. The Pompadour worsted the Margravine. For the only reply Tençin received was one through Bernis, the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The latter dictated a letter to him to send the Margravine, curtly refusing any suggestions of peace. Thus was the great Cardinal snubbed! The importance, however, of the Margravine's exertions may be gauged by a despatch of Choiseul's, the French Envoy at Vienna, of February 6th: "The conduct of Madame the Margravine of Baireuth in the Empire has given rise to all the suspicions of ill-temper with which the Imperial Ministers have favoured me."

No wonder that we find Frederic writing to his sister that, though the receipt of her letter filled him with satisfaction, the account of her health gave him less. Her home troubles did not improve it. Her enemies, she wrote to Frederic, worried her over trifles. They intended to annoy her and succeeded. For a fortnight she could not get a letter through. When Osten had been arrested, an innocuous letter from the Margravine and some rosettes she had sent him, had been taken with him and sent to Vienna. Upon which the Imperial Ministry took a high and mighty tone, and threatened drastic measures with the Court of Baireuth. The Margrave's minister asked the Margravine in a very pointed manner if indeed these rosettes

had not been made to commemorate the victory of Rosbach, to which the Margravine, nothing daunted, replied coldly that, hitherto, she had only worn a rosette, but now she would wear a whole sash of the colours, that she was so proud of belonging to a man whom all the universe had entitled great, that she would like to write that name up in every corner of her room, because every time she saw it, it would remind her to do nothing unworthy of him.

She heard no more of the matter, but her channels of communication were discovered, her servants betrayed, and all the roads barred to her correspondence. She wrote a sad account of the treatment of the poor Prussian prisoners, whom she nursed, when they tried to escape.

The news she gave of Anspach was as bad as that of Baireuth. The Duke of Würtemberg and "that devil" Seckendorff had got hold of the young Margrave at Stuttgart, to his mother's despair. Sickness at Prague had nearly wiped out the Würtemberg troops there; the plague might follow. Even Voltaire's letters, full of lamentations over the war, were not worth sending on to Frederic. From a French officer who had been on survey at Baireuth, she heard that in the next campaign the Austrians were planning to sit fast in impregnable places and let the Russians bear the brunt. Baireuth had not only been pillaged, and requisitioned for troops, but had been forced to pay up the "Roman Months" twice over, to the tune of 50,000 crowns. It was their "bad neighbours," the Bishops, that were the cause of all the troubles, and the Margrave's ministry were too weak and frightened to resist. But with some hope for the future ended this long and most grumbling letter. But they were hopes so mingled with apprehensions that Wilhelmina's life was wretched, and, worst of all —who knows when she will find means to write to Frederic again!

But four days later she got a letter through in an envelope not addressed to the King. While begging forgiveness for troubling him with her rigmaroles, when he was so occupied, it was not for herself that she wrote, but for one of her ladies-in-waiting. Her little property near Rostok was being put under contribution by the King, in consequence of the war with Sweden in those parts. The unfortunate girl was half ruined, and her mistress wrote to beg exemption from the King. She appealed to his generosity on behalf of one very devoted to her. But Frederic replied that he could make no exception; his own officers had to contribute, and any estate which was let off would raise a howl of jealousy. It went against the grain with him to refuse Wilhelmina any personal favour, however, and we find him hoping to find other means to compensate the unfortunate Mecklenbürgerin.

This letter ends in a strangely foreboding manner. Wilhelmina's anxiety increased as time went on. She no longer, as Frederic had put it, "saw daylight." Her only comfort would be to know him happy and victorious in the course of this year; or she would only find happiness in the grave. Only the extinction of herself, however, would extinguish her love, devotion, and veneration for the greatest man in the world.

February saw Colonel Mayer again descend upon Thuringia and Franconia, which had grown too uppish, and he appeared at Planen. There were "incursions and alarms" all over Baireuth, a hurried fortifying of Hof, armings and marchings among the Circle troops, and panic everywhere. The two Bishops, well supplied with Austrian money, were in good case, but the Protestants in the Army were inclined to change sides when they saw a chance, wrote the Margravine. She announced a new commander, the Prince of Zweibrücken, who would do no better with his "miserable" host than Hildburghausen, and also that thirty thousand French had already passed the Rhine, and Soubise's army of twenty-four

thousand more were to cross into Bohemia. This, then, had been the end of all her peace efforts! A new campaign was about to open. The barbarism of war, and a state of society as under the Medicis, Phillip II., and the Popes, seemed to her about to return. A mediæval barbarism was to be united to modern vices. And this after all her labours for the advancement of art and culture! Disgusted with the world, she felt succumbing to the evils of it, only Frederic held her back from giving it all up! Yet, as long as she still breathed, she would do what she could for him. Prince Henry was no longer in Saxony, and she asks whom she is to inform as to the enemy's movements on her side. Mayer's presence made communication more difficult than ever; and she was seeking new emissaries, and it took at least ten days to get letters through.

Frederic's one idea was now to cheer her, to hold the beloved sister back from the grave into which she feels herself slipping. He writes scolding her lovingly, begging her to leave him to worry over his enemies, and not to give him cause to distress himself about her. A new tone is visible in his letters; when discussing the military and political situation he dwells on the bright side, and winds up hopefully and cheerfully, and always with affectionate mention of her and her health. He soothes and calms, preaching patience and resignation: "There is an age when one should be ashamed of playing with hope like children with a doll; one must make up one's mind to everything, and take one's chance freely. You and I, we have seen our best years go by, those that are left us to spend in the world are not many, so we must be tranquil, whatever happens." By Mermann he sent her the medal struck in commemoration of Rosbach; he wrote sympathising warmly over the Rosbach rosette business, and the "Roman Months" trouble. He quoted the prophecies in Berlin that peace would come between the spring and August, though he felt hardly able to believe it. The coming campaign

would indeed be rough and bitter, but already Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick had begun to hunt the French in the north across the Weser, and he implored Wilhelmina to be calm and patient, and to remember, "I beg you, that the greatest misfortune which could happen to me would be to lose you."

CHAPTER VI

DELIVERANCE

The blasting of hopes of peace.—The beginning of the Margravine's last illness.—Military preparations all round.—The campaign begins.—The occupation of Baireuth.—The opening of the Castle Church.—The situation at Baireuth grows unbearable.—Wilhelmina's appeal for help.—Prince Henry to the rescue.—A last whiff of home.—The Margravine's critical condition.—Ill news held back.—Frederic's anxiety.—Baireuth delivered.—The avenging of the Homeland.—Frederic hears the truth.—The last weeks of agony.—A last word from Voltaire. —Frederic's goodbye.—Too late.

On March 2nd died the Cardinal de Tençin. He died, according to Voltaire, of chagrin, from the rebuff he had received from Louis, when presenting the Margravine's letter, through Bernis. His death may really be considered as the Margravine's death-blow. Her illness began, which was to prove fatal, and she took to her bed. So sanguine about peace, she had literally worn herself out over her exertions to secure it. Five times in the course of a year had she opened negotiations with five different emissaries.

Ste. Beuve says of her:

"She took much upon herself in writing these long letters; her strength was exhausted, a cough racked her, and she entered on the last months of her mortal sufferings. All the end of the year, 1757, she did not cease, even after the new and quite glorious victory of Lissa or Leuthen, from following up the negotiations already undertaken, 'she only breathes peace.' But the Versailles Ministry would hear of no proposal apart from their allies; they would have liked it, but, after Rosbach, they could less than ever listen with honour; and the exhaustion was not sufficient on any side to induce moderation. The death of Cardinal de Tençin, in March, 1758, deprived them of a convenient and safe channel in case these had become necessary to use it again."

WILHELMINA, MARGRAVINE OF BAIREUTH

[illegible] in the Hohenzollern Museum, Berlin

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AND TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

Early in 1758, Great Britain, sunk in despondency, was wakened by the energy of Pitt, determined to wrest from France "every possession she had outside her borders, and to leave her crushed, humiliated, and powerless for aggression."

So, far from thinking of peace, France was more active than ever. The Margravine reported to the King that a French colonel had been sent to inspect the Circles Army, and to submit to them a plan of campaign, and that he announced French subsidies for Würtemberg and Bavaria for supplying troops in execution of the Treaty of Vienna. She saw a letter from an important French officer to a friend at Baireuth, showing that there was a treaty afoot between France and England to draw the French off Hanover, Brunswick, and Hesse. The line of France, too short of money to continue the war in America, was to abandon her conquests there, and concentrate her strength in Germany, and then, after weakening the combatants, to dictate terms. Prince Charles of Lorraine, the Emperor's brother-in-law, was named as the new General of the Circles Army.

Wilhelmina found it very difficult to follow Frederic's advice. He told her to be a Stoic. If that were possible, Stoicism were real happiness, she writes. But no one was ever a true Stoic. Light-hearted people only, she thought, became philosophers. But the greater and deeper the mind, the deeper it thinks, the more it feels, but it does not become so cast down. She herself felt a miserable atom, devoured with distress.

The ubiquitous Witmann, the Imperial Envoy, was at work again, arranging for the French Army to enter the Circle, and to camp at Fürth. The Bishop of Bamberg would open to them his fortress; Nuremberg would make a stand, but be forced to yield, and the Margrave of Baireuth would probably have to surrender his ewe lamb fortress, Plassenburg. But the principality could not possibly billet any French troops as, in spite of the

Margrave's orders and precautions, food was short. There was so much corruption among the officials. The Margravine sent the King details of the Russian and Austrian troops, and suggested to him, if the French joined with the "miserable" Army and acted with Russia, to divide the Prussian corps, as, if the French were beaten, it would discourage the other allies.

The Austrian Army, she told him in another cypher, had only 40,000 men fit to march, and 36,000 sick. There were plenty of recruits, aged from fifteen to sixteen, but no arms; the men were in rags, carrying different sorts of weapons. Maria Theresa, who was wringing money from the monasteries and using the treasure, was being kept in the dark, but, if Prussia could but secure the arsenal of Budin, Austria was lost. The Margravine heard that two French columns were coming into the Circle through Mainz. If only the news of the Turkish diversion was true! Vienna lay open to them on that side, and she wondered England did not try and induce the Sultan to act. Mirabeau sent news from Paris that France wanted peace, and that the Empress could not continue the war alone, unless helped by Russia.

Frederic opened the campaign, in the middle of March, by going to besiege Schweidnitz. The Circle and the Austrian regiments entered Baireuth territory. In a cypher translated in the Margravine's own hand, dateless and unsigned, the King implores her once again to furl her sails.

"For the love of God, don't come to blows with the tyrants of Europe! Yield in everything that you are unable to dispute, all the more as things must change their aspect shortly, directly the French are swept across the Rhine. I hope, too, my brother Henry will soon be able to give a slap to the Circle."

The chastising of the French by Prince Ferdinand, and the prowlings of the redoubtable Mayer, helped somewhat to relieve the tension in Baireuth, and the Margravine was able to get letters through to the King,

viâ Prince Henry, having discovered new methods and new agents. Her spirits had revived a little, and she writes somewhat in her old bantering style, grateful for Frederic's scoldings, and hoping to be so off her head with joy shortly as to be fit to be shut up as a lunatic for believing the Berlin prophets. True indeed, she writes, was the news she heard that the Austrians were quite crushed, and that Frederic would take Vienna this campaign. Two officers from Paris, who were at Baireuth, told her of the King's popularity there, of the public disapproval of the ministers' action, and of the poor stand Clermont would make against Prince Ferdinand. But she wrote to the King of the death of the Cardinal, of how much she regretted him, and of his sincere devotion to Frederic. Her other Lyons acquaintance, Belleisle, had become a minister, with the pompous title, she writes, of that of "War and the Conquered Countries." How she hoped it might soon be that of "Castles in Spain." She enclosed a letter from that happy hermit, Voltaire, amusing himself acting plays to the Swiss, and the Margravine wondered if he would turn the cheese-makers into poets.

The spring found Wilhelmina in a terrible state of weakness, the result of internal inflammation and acute rheumatism. Her eyesight, too, had become worse lately, as her letters, her handwriting, and especially her signatures show. Though the writing to Frederic was a great effort in her low state, she kept him informed of the state of affairs in her country. Mayer's force of Free Corps had been too weak to do its work thoroughly, and clear away the Austrian and Circle troops. Witmann had arrived, demanding on the part of the Kaiser the cession of Plassenburg. In vain the Margrave delayed and temporised. Had the King's troops come into the Circle, he would have tried resistance, but as it was, he had to yield. Prince Henry, commanding the army in Saxony, was to come to the rescue, but his sister feared he would have his work cut out for him.

For Rothenburg, a walled town, had been relinquished by the Elector of Bavaria, and was being converted into an arsenal. The Austrian Army had levied provisions out of Culmbach and Bamberg, and there were six or seven millions of gulden to be wrung from the two Bishoprics. Witmann gave no hope of peace; he said Austria would fight to the last man. But the Margravine reported that the Würtemberg troops, Protestants, were in a pitiable state; the recruits would not fight, and had to be chained together to prevent their running away. She would like to have added more, but weakness prevented her, and we have a sad little loving note of a few lines written the next day, while enduring much suffering. Her state was pitiful, and only the wish to tell Frederic of her affection nerved her to write. Its receipt

"almost extinguished the joy I was in at the disgraceful flight of the French. What, my dear sister, you want me always to be trembling for you? No, you do not love me any more; if you loved me, you would take care of a life to which mine is devoted. By all that is most dear, be pleased to spare yourself, and remember that luck and glory are nothing to my heart if I lose you."

The very next day she hurriedly sent very bad news, feeling doubtful if it could ever be possible for her to write again. For, not content with having seized Plassenburg, the enemy were actually going to form a camp at Baireuth itself. The state of things was so terrible that the Margravine did not dare commit it to paper, but she and the Margrave, she writes, were treated infamously and utterly ruined. Though the Electors of Bavaria and the Palatine and the Bishop Electors were, she heard, backing out of the game, yet her own neighbouring ecclesiastics, especially him of Bamberg, "mainstay of hell," and where the devilish Council was held, would, she wrote, see it through.

Frederic, having laid Schweidnitz low, had started on his strategic march through the hills, his near objective Olmütz, Vienna in the distance. The Margra-

vine knew that he could not spare a man or a moment to attend to Baireuth, and that her other brother was waiting to dart down on Prague. So she did not cry for help, or attempt to disarrange his plans. She wrote with dignity, remembering the days of her youth, and her Spartan upbringing. Tardily, indeed, she was grateful to her father, who taught her to do without luxury, and to live like a private person, remote from the world and its pomp. She only sent her brother her wishes for success, pouring into his sympathising heart her troubles, the greatest of which was that she would no longer be able to write to, or hear news of him.

Two days later, however, after bidding him what she thought a long adieu, a lucky change in the enemy's positions enabled her to get a letter through. But it was a letter so badly and incorrectly written that it spoke volumes to Frederic of her weakness and failing eye-sight. The preparations for the camp were beginning, and a village, which was in the way, was threatened with demolition. Very scornfully does the Margravine write of the manœuvring of the army which had beset her, and which was encamped at the gibbets, mounting guard over the poor wretches who had been hanged, which seemed to the satirical Wilhelmina an evil omen for themselves. She felt sure that she herself would have made a better general! Happily, she added, her weakness and her rheumatism would prevent her being personally annoyed by the unpleasant sight of her visitors. She kept Prince Henry informed, and sent the King a list of the troops, and hoped to obtain a plan of the camp. Though they were threatened by a descent of the French Army into the Circle, she wrote enthusiastically and authentically that the troops of the Suabian Circle had been withdrawn from the Army, on account of friction with Austria.

In the midst of the dire stress of this winter at Baireuth the new Schloss Church had been rebuilt by St. Pierre on the ruins of the old one, which had

perished in the fire, the day after the castle had been consumed. For the organ looked on one side into the church, and, on the other, into a little theatre of the castle. Here the fire broke out afresh the following morning, and reached the church. On Easter Day, 1758, the new church was consecrated "in the presence of the whole Court," the music being rendered by the Court orchestra and the Italian singers. The Margravine had taken a great interest in the rebuilding of the church, in pursuance of the injunction so strangely found on the only unconsumed leaf of the altar Bible. She felt that her days were numbered, that, for her, there would be no rebound, no recovery, and gave orders that she wished to be buried there.

For the moment, however, the feeling that there was yet work to be done for Frederic revived her. Plassenburg had been given back to its rightful owner, who was now going to make it ready for a state of siege. The Margravine, smuggling a letter through to the King under cover of someone else's correspondence, wrote to ask him to give a commission in his army to the son of the General Beist, the widower with four children who had married the flirtatious lady-in-waiting, the Cassubien's niece, after the latter's escapade with the married gentleman-usher, Westerhagen. The Margravine had suffered much with the young lady in the old Marwitz days. But she was ever loyal and generous to her dependants, constantly doing things for them. The rheumatism had left her weak, and it is with trembling hands and in a very shaky handwriting, and with apologies for a confused letter and bad writing, that she tells the King that the French Army, of twenty-four thousand men, would certainly pass through Baireuth on their way to Bohemia to join the Austrians.

Frederic was just off "on great adventures" Moravia way. His start was cheered by news of Wilhelmina's improved health, and, though communication would be difficult, he begged her urgently to keep her health, and

also for a letter at least once a month to say how she was. He was aware of the distressed state of Baireuth and the forming of the Circle camp, and would, he promised, find means to relieve it. But:

"I have not time to add a word to this, only assuring you that, idle or busy, happy or unfortunate, now and always, I shall be to the last breath of life, with entire affection, my dear sister, your faithful brother and servant,

"FREDERIC."

Wilhelmina, overjoyed with the fate of Schweidnitz, sat breathless, watching and waiting, while Frederic marched to Olmütz. With a cessation of acute suffering, something of the old buoyant pride and delight in his doings is apparent in her letters again. Her handwriting grows clearer and less cramped, her signature more normal. But now the French had been scotched, the attitude of the Russians became alarming, and the home situation did not improve. The Margravine calculated that there were fourteen thousand men of the Circle Army in Baireuth. The principality was under the heel of the hated triumvirate, the Bishop of Bamberg, Witmann, and the Prince of Stolberg. The Prince of Zweibrücken was their general, a very bad one, who starved his troops and supplied himself with two hundred servants and five hundred horses. All ranks of the Darmstadt contingent were drunk every night, and the religious feeling ran so high that the Margravine herself daily witnessed bloody encounters between Roman Catholics and Protestants, the latter shouting for "Fritz," and ready to go over to the first Prussian troops they saw. Wistfully the Margravine writes to the King, that these latter are now as near as Hof, and, that if it comes to a fight, she would certainly go and look on, and would bless the Prussians if she were taken prisoner. In these last months Wilhelmina was growing homesick; feeling the hand of death upon her, she longed for home. It was a great pleasure and comfort to have her nephew, the Margrave of Anspach,

with her, a nice young fellow, promising well, and zealous for the King. He was to the Margrave and Wilhelmina as a son, the son they had never possessed. It was something to have him out of the clutches of that "devil Seckendorff."

Another whiff of happier days, now no more, steals into a letter at this time. The Margravine chronicles the loss by the French of another of her acquaintance on her southern tour, the *Foudroyant*—that huge vessel, as it seemed to her, after her little galleys of the Brandenburg Lake, "with its four little comfortable and well decorated rooms, used by the Duke of Richelieu when he went to and from Minorca. Duquesne's flagship was taken by the English in the Mediterranean and became one of the English Fleet.

Very pathetic is the close of this letter. It had been a happy day, for she had spent it with Frederic. When should she have the joy of finding him again? One moment of his presence would reward her for all her sufferings and anxieties. Even to think of it gave her a foretaste of the paradise which she felt was not far off, and she writes that she thinks the happiness would suffocate her. If but Heaven would permit her to enjoy that bliss, the only other joy she longed for besides his happiness and safety, for he was more dear to her than herself.

The Margravine pored over the map, and assured herself that the King's plan of campaign could not but succeed. Paris was busy with love-making, Vienna with processions and fasting, Stockholm and Petersburg were selling human lives. But Baireuth would soon be fasting too, she wrote. For the whole Army of the Circles was gathered there, and the town was threatened with two more regiments and six hundred Pandours. Every evening the General, the Prince of Zweibrücken, came into town, to the castle, with Witmann and another General, and the Margravine, who at first held proudly aloof, heard that he was

very pleasant and a good disciplinarian, which was well for the land.

After a while the Margravine unbent to the intruders.

"I saw the Prince of Zweibrücken yesterday, and the minister and the Austrian generals," she hastens to inform the King. "The Prince is very polite; he seems to have more common sense than mind. Witmann is as out of countenance and flabbergasted as a man being led to the gallows. The others put a better restraint upon themselves. . . . W. has an idea that they must make peace, *coûte qui coûte*, with you, adding that we must unite irrevocably, and turn our arms against a third, but he shrugged his shoulders."

Another distinguished visitor to Baireuth at this time was the Duke of Hildburghausen. "He is Prussian, out and out." The Margrave spoke to him about Denmark, "as the Duke has much influence in Copenhagen; and in the Duke's opinion the King of Denmark, who is entirely Prussian, may perhaps declare for Prussia." But even while thus "breathing peace," again in a different direction, a military ardour seizes her, and she curses the fate which made her a woman so that she cannot lay down her life for Frederic.

A hasty, dateless cypher from the King showed the Margravine that the salvation of Baireuth must come, not from any direct interference on his part, for, "if I carry the war into your land, it will be ruined, root and branch, and they will burn and pillage and devastate you utterly," but from his action in Moravia, which would draw the Circles into Bohemia to support Daun. "We are in a new crisis . . . but a little patience," and he reassures her.

Wilhelmina was most grateful that Frederic should find time to occupy himself with the interests of her "wretched self." But while hopeful over his prospects, she could not forget the terrible sorrows of the past twelve months, which had taken years off her life, she wrote. The situation in Baireuth was most sad. Zweibrücken, indeed, kept order and paid for everything, but the land was ruined; the fields remained untilled,

because the peasants were forced to drive the waggons and work at the two camps. Another had been pitched at Culmbach, and famine stared them in the face. Purple fever was rife at Hof and causing great mortality. One morning, as the Margravine was writing, there was some fresh plan afoot. The city was being surveyed, and a new camp laid out in a field whence the Margrave's horses drew their forage; which would make money affairs much worse. She and the Margrave lived in a perpetual restraint, surrounded by traitors who were bribed to spy on them. However, she forced herself to receive company, in order to glean news for the King and Prince Henry. Though the plans seemed to change from day to day—which was perhaps done to blind her—she gathered from the Austrian officers that the Circle Army was going to join the Saxons in Bohemia, *viâ* Bavaria and the Upper Palatinate, and that the French Army was going to act alone. Daily she wrote, she studied the map, and, if her head were opened, nothing but Frederic and his concerns would be found inside!

It was but natural that, in her feeble state of health, Wilhelmina should magnify troubles, and the state of things in her own land seems to have got on her nerves. Though fearful of upsetting the King's plans in any way, yet she could not refrain on May 10th from writing a long cypher to him in a sort of panic:

"I should be in despair, my dear brother, if you neglected the least of your interests out of love for me; our case is such that our ruin is inevitable, whichever way things turn. If they (the Circles Army) enter Saxony, they will be bested, and all the horde will escape hither; if they go into Bohemia, they will disband and mutiny. They have bound themselves by an oath to do so, and will kill their generals and officers if they could not avoid it; in which case we should still get them. I beg you not to neglect your interests, which are more dear to me than mine. It would be a real trouble to me if the monastic species escaped you; they would fatten your treasury, which perhaps requires nourishment. . . . They are on the point of marching. The Prince of Stolberg is at Münchberg with the corps which was at Culmbach. We know for

certain that the army will march, but up till now they do not know its destination. It is in position on the Saxon road, but, under the rose, they say it will go by that of Bohemia"—

and she goes on to warn him of the probable French descent into Bohemia, which, however, did not come off, and of a plan of France for Prussia to mediate between her and England. She adds a postscript in handwriting, probably to authenticate the cypher: "Excuse nothing but this scrawl, but time presses to warn my brother (Henry)."

But even before the receipt of this appeal, he, to whom Wilhelmina never appealed in vain, had taken steps. A short line was on its way to her:—"You shall soon be quit of your enemies," while, to their brother in Saxony, he had written, three days before, ordering him to leave a sufficient force at Dresden to keep Haddick in check, and to march with the rest "straight to Bamberg, in order to disperse all the Circle troops there, and to force the Bishop to make his peace, to recall his troops, and to promise, at least, neutrality. It will be a good beginning of your campaign." On the 7th he wrote again. The "monastic species" were to catch it hot!

"On this occasion you will not spare the Bishop of Bamberg at all, nor the other ill-wishers, and will make them come back to neutrality. When you have entirely dispersed the Circle Army, which I think will be an expedition of about eight days, and when you have drawn big requisitions from Bamberg, and the other inimical parties, you will turn first towards Bohemia, and march straight on Prague."

To Wilhelmina he wrote the next day that he was very pleased to see by her firmer handwriting that she was better, and trusted that soon she would receive other news which would give her pleasure.

In reply came a cypher, as usual, through Prince Henry, probably the last cypher Wilhelmina ever wrote. This work of writing letters in cypher was slow and laborious, and a great effort in her present state, and she had

written so very many! Anxious to smooth the way for Prince Henry's expedition, she sends what she believes to be authentic news, that, if the Prussian troops appear in the Circle, the Circle Army would fly to the fortified town of Rothenburg which had been provisioned and munitioned for six months. She gave numbers and details of the Circle Army, which was going to camp at Baireuth, which was in process of being fortified. She also sent news from France. One of her gentlemen had just come back from thence; the people were all for Frederic, but the Pompadour influenced Bernis's party. Out of 40,000 only 18,000 were left in the French Army, and their march on Bohemia was being delayed. In Vienna there were rage and dread over the King's inroad into Moravia. It had produced a similar consternation among the Austrian troops in Baireuth.

On May 22nd Prince Henry came into Franconia, laid the "heavy hand" on Bishop Adam, and the Circle Army bolted into Bohemia at his approach. It was a good move on the part of Frederic, this descent on the "odious neighbour," which relieved Wilhelmina of the "brigands which surrounded" her, without carrying the war into her own midst. An immense joy to her also was the visit of Prince Henry, "the last sight she ever had of a brother, or of the old Prussian uniform" she had mocked at in her flippant youth, but had ever loved. "Our poor Wilhelmina, alas! she is sunk in sickness this year more than ever; journeying towards death in fact." Frederic, sitting early in June before Olmütz, the taking of which seemed to him then only a question of days, cyphers to her, *viâ* Prince Henry, that his "heart would rejoice" if he thought that the latter's expedition had been of use to her.

"*Messieurs de* Bamberg, Würzburg and the Bavarians will pay dearly for their madness or they will withdraw their troops from Bohemia. The French are growing weary, the Russians are suspicious, and the Austrians are losing heart. With all that, my dear sister, it is only a question of holding on, and the good cause

will triumph ; I hope then everything will have been made right, and that a happy peace will procure for me the pleasure of seeing you and hearing you and embracing you."

But it was not to be. The Margravine's letter in reply shows how ill she was. It begins firmly, as if she was making a great effort—the bold, equal writing of old ; but it grows trembling at the end, not easy to read, and, with one exception, is the only letter among those of the Seven Years' War time which she left undated. His dear letter had been a balm to her, and his cheery optimism could not but induce her to try and hold on to life. She would live, if only to see the happiness of her adorable brother, which is all her heart clings to. One notices that it is no longer with her a question of fame and earthly glory. She had realised the meretriciousness of all she once thought worth having, had tasted the vanity of human aims and ambitions. Besides the disease of her lungs she suffered again from rheumatism in her limbs and in her chest ; mortification was feared, and the end seemed very near. But even in her greatest suffering it was a happiness to think that it was she, and not Frederic, who was ill, and she ends abruptly, too weak to go on, but with a heart devoted to him in whatever condition she was.

The Prince of Prussia died on June 12th. But the Margravine was so ill that the news was kept from her, and the King's letter informing her of it, hurriedly written by a secretary, as he was pressed for time, had to be withheld. To the rheumatism and the lung mischief, dropsical symptoms, similar to those which had carried off her father, had supervened. Prince Henry, who had seen her recently, thought her dying. Frederic had been busy for weeks with the siege of, and the retreat from Olmütz. In the short breathing space at Königgratz, one of the few he was to know in these harassing months, Frederic found time to write her a heartrending wail. But he did not yet realise that she had been in a critical state. One can well believe that Wilhelmina,

aware of the stress and strain which beset him, had *that* bad news kept from *him*, and once more, and for the last time, the two played a little at cross purposes.

After referring to the loss of Prince William, and forgiving him—now that it was too late—

"Oh! dearest of my family," he writes, "you who are closest to my heart in the world, for the love of what is most precious to you, spare yourself, that I may at least have the comfort of weeping out my tears on your breast. Do not fear for us or for what seems to you apprehensive; you will see that we shall extricate ourselves.

"As I have had no news of you for a long time, it makes me tremble for your life. For God's sake, make some servant write, 'The Margravine is better,' or 'She has been ill'; that is better than the cruel uncertainty I am in. Please relieve me by a little word, and be assured that my life is inseparable from yours."

On this came a letter from Prince Henry with the worst, dated July 28th:

"My sister of Baireuth has been at death's door, she cannot write; I fear she will not recover from this illness. She is in ignorance of the death of my brother, and they rightly fear that this news will dissipate the little hope they have of her restoration."

This blow fell on Frederic in "the terrible time of trial for our poor family and all that is Prussian," and found him just starting for Silesia on that splendid march to beat back the Russians from Berlin.

"What you tell me about my sister of Baireuth," he replies to Henry, in the midst of elaborate instructions for the new movements, "makes me quake; after our worthy mother, she is what I have most dearly cherished in the world. She is a sister who has my heart and all my trust, and whose character could not be adequately rewarded by all the crowns of earth."

At this supreme moment the memory of the sacrifice she had made in the long ago, a memory never entirely obliterated, surges into his mind with redoubled force. He goes back to the old days, "my early youth, brought up with her, so that you can reckon upon it that there reigns between us two indissoluble bonds of affection and devotion for life, such as no other ties and the dis-

proportion of age ever cement. Please Heaven I perish before her," he cries wildly, "and that this last blow does not take away my life, even if I do not really lose it!"

To Wilhelmina he wrote the next day a most pathetic appeal:

"My dearest Sister,

"I hear you are very bad; imagine my anxiety, my grief, my despair. If ever I have asked from you a mark of affection, if ever you have had any love for me, I now ask for a proof. Keep yourself alive, if not for yourself, think that it is for a brother who adores you, who looks upon you as his best friend, as his comfort; think that, of all my relations, you are the dearest remaining to me. I shall find means to rid myself of all my enemies, and, if it please Heaven, I shall extricate the country, but if I lose you, the loss is irreparable to me, and it will be you who plunged a dagger in my heart. Everything in a state of things may change, but the death of a person like you is an evil without remedy; by all that is dear and precious to you, try and conquer the great troubles you have and those which may be mutual to us; but, above everything, preserve yourself. My life is bound up with yours, and without you it would be unbearable. You are my consolation and the only person to whom my heart can open without constraint. Oh! my dear sister, either you know me ill, or, if you knew me well, you would make every possible effort to get well; you would calm your cares, you would conquer yourself, you would take the greatest care of yourself.

"As for me, have no anxiety. You know business never goes smoothly, but I assure you you will have good news of our military operations. I am well, and shall be well, when I hear that you are better; but if I get bad news from Baireuth, my courage will succumb.

"This is all my grief allows of my saying to you, except to assure you of the inviolable affection that I vowed to you in the cradle."

Meantime Wilhelmina had written to him the last of all the letters she was ever to pen with her own hand. It took her three hours to write these few lines, her poor stiff, aching wrist rubbed the while with spirits. The letter is so shaky as to be almost illegible; it is disjointed, incorrectly spelt, is blotted, and the signature almost unrecognisable. Evidently partial blindness had

been added to all her other sufferings, and Wilhelmina's beautiful keen eyes were already dimmed by death. She was still kept utterly in the dark about the King's disasters, for the letter ends with a fervent hope for the fall of Olmütz. It is her heart, she writes, that guides her feeble writing, and she begins for the last time, as always before, with the reiteration of her love, and then, before she comes to anything about herself, she gives the King news of how matters are in France, warning him of intrigues against peace, and of the Pompadour's machinations. Nothing concerns her now except what affects the dear brother.

Frederic was "more dead than alive" with the shock when he received this fatal missive at his camp at Grüssau on August 9th, resting his men, if not himself, after the hurried climb over the Giant Mountains.

"My God! what a handwriting! You must be returning from the grave, for certainly you must have been a hundred times worse than they told me. I thank Heaven that I did not know it, and I beg you to be so kind as to borrow someone else's hand to write to me, not to tire yourself so as to injure your health. What, sick and feeble as you are, you think of all the worries which beset me! Indeed, that is too much! Think rather, and convince yourself, that, without you there is no more happiness in the world for me, that my days hang on yours, and that it depends on you to shorten or prolong my career."

At the same time he sent off a note to the Margrave which shows plainly the hurry and stress in which he lay, begging for particulars of the illness of which he had heard nothing, and asking that the Margravine's own doctor Wagner should write to him, which was done.

The Margravine attempted no more to write, but dictated, with apologies for her great weakness, her next letter, "not to the King, but to the friend and the dear brother." She had been hitherto "in a hell, more of mind than of body," caused by her husband's well-meaning withholding of the King's letters to her. "To hide the loss which we have sustained, the Margrave

kept back all the letters from you; I thought all was lost. I have just received your dear letters, which have softened the bitterness caused me by the loss of my brother, which, however, I felt extremely." The death of William was a blow for which she had to forgive Frederic, who was certainly not guiltless concerning it. But, if he acted inhumanly, he acted as the chief servant of his State, and never a word of reproach fell from Wilhelmina. She had evidently made up her mind that it was the King's death they were concealing, and the knowledge of the truth softened the blow. But Wilhelmina had always been very attached to her brother William. During those terrible years of coolness with Frederic, William always believed in her, writes d'Adhémar in his *Éloge*, and she "never remembered but with a keen gratitude all that she owed to him" for his efforts.

After she heard of the loss of her brother, which came to her as a death knell, the Margravine made her will, and signed and sealed it on August 6th, in the presence of her husband, her daughter, d'Adhémar, and a few other witnesses.

Wilhelmina herself gives us an account of her last few pitiful weeks of suffering.

"Like a poor Lazarus," she dictates to Frederic, "I have been six months in bed. For the last week I have been lifted on to a wheel chair in order to get a little change of position. I have a dry cough which is very heavy, and which they cannot subdue. My legs, as well as my hands and face, are swollen like a bushel. . . . I am resigned to my fate; I live and die content if only you are happy."

The intense interest in Frederic's affairs never slackened. Wilhelmina was not one of those selfish invalids whose horizons are bounded by the four walls of their sick room.

"My heart tells me that Heaven will still perform miracles in your favour. Your enemies are near their fall, and if they do win any slight advantage, their pride makes them inflated, and they then commit the most stupid mistakes in the world."

It is pleasing to think that the Margravine lived to see her own Baireuth freed from the "inconvenient guests" who had so long occupied it. But she writes that the last corps of Austrian and Circle troops which passed through on their way to Bohemia, carried off everything, and completely ruined the country, having cut down the crops and the fruit trees before they were ripe, "but one must be patient over one's misfortunes. We are not any better than the other princes who have suffered worse than we did." Pathetically she concludes that her chest is so weak she can hardly speak, "but my heart would chatter from morning till night if it could speak and say all that it thinks of my dear brother," and she herself put the date and signed a trembling "*Wilmine*," the old pet name of their nursery days.

Towards the end of August Frederic was back again in the homeland, wrestling, in the Cüstrin district of his prison days and earliest administrative labours, with the Minotaur of the North, which had laid a paw on Brandenburg. On the very day of the victory of Zorndorf he scribles a hasty line to announce it in the sick room far away in Baireuth with "a thousand and thousand embraces." From Tamsel, a few days later, the scene of his early flirtation, he answers on the instant her letter just received. Frederic is flushed with victory, hopeful again over everything in the world except Wilhelmina, yet tries in vain to persuade himself that there is hope, even for her. "Oh! my dear, my divine sister, deign to do the impossible in order to get well. My life, my happiness, my existence is in your hands!" The agony overpowers the triumph of the conqueror. His favourite aide-de-camp too had fallen; "my eyes have become fountains of tears . . . and once more, as of old, I confide in you all my griefs and secret sorrows."

Wilhelmina's wonderful clearness of mind lasted to the end, undimmed by her bodily sufferings. She wrote to the King after Zorndorf suggestions of peace and also by d'Adhémar made another tentative through

Voltaire. But peace Frederic was not to receive from her hands. He applauded her good intentions, but was "dumb as a carp." France, Austria, and Russia might speak, had they anything to say, "but for me I will limit myself to beating them and holding my tongue. May Heaven grant," he wrote to Wilhelmina, "that I get good news of my sister. That interests me more than any negotiations."

That she had succeeded in hoodwinking him as to the hopelessness of her state by her mental vitality, Frederic's replies, two in one day, show. The doctor's account and some slight improvement gave him also a ray of hope. Quite in the old style he encloses a letter for Voltaire, and gives her military details of the victory. He was on his way to join Henry at Dresden, and to turn Daun and the Circle troops out of Saxony. The replies were sent by a messenger who had brought the Margravine's letter. "I have catechised him on all that he knows or does not know; he tells me that he has not seen you; I implore you, of your kindness, if you send anyone, let him see you before he starts," Frederic adds, wistfully. "I shall at least think to find in his eyes the reflection of the image of her my heart adores." He hopes against hope and deludes himself. He sends her a poem, and a philosophic classical remark in the old vein, and then he concludes with "a thousand embraces; my heart and my soul are at Baireuth with you, and my frail body vegetates here on the highways and in the camps, a dog of a life. . . ."

Then he gained Dresden and met his brother, on the 12th. Henry must have disillusioned him, for he wrote a heartrending letter on the 18th to Wilhelmina, imploring, coaxing, entreating her back to life and health. Cothenius was ordered to hurry to Baireuth; he had been so useful before, might he not save now? What did not Frederic suffer during that "month of deadlock," starving Daun out of the rocky fortresses of Stolpen! "The Baireuth news throws me into despair."

A wild hope seizes him, that if only she will take care, she may yet recover. "I throw myself at your feet, I beg, I implore you to do all that you can to get over this illness. Eat, use all the remedies and do blindly what your doctor orders." He writes till writing becomes almost too painful and death appears sweet. To the Margrave he sent a letter with thanks for the peace endeavour, but was still stiff in his refusal to take the first step, and enclosed a prescription which he begged Wagner to try on the Margravine. A day later, and he pours himself out to his brother Henry, divided from him by the Elbe.

"I implore you, do not take away hope, the only resource of the unhappy. Remember that I was born and brought up with my sister of Baireuth, that one's first links are indissoluble, and that the liveliest affection between us has never felt the slightest change, that we have separate bodies, but only one soul. Think how, after having passed through so many kinds of sorrow fit to disgust me with life, only that one remains which I dread, in order to make it insupportable to me. There, my dear brother, is the depth of my soul, and I only describe to you a part of the melancholy ideas with which it is filled. My thoughts are so black to-day that you will not think it ill if I lock them up to myself."

On September 25th, Wilhelmina dictated what was to be her last letter. It is quite in her old strain, clever, literary, bantering, and shows how clear was her mind.

"There is no joy without sorrow in the world; if I had followed my instinct I would have shown you myself first the joy which your last victory caused me; but my swollen arms and my now increased cough, prevented me. I tremble to think of the unfortunate position in which you found yourself before this blow, and of which, happily, I was only partly aware. However that may be, you are not only destined to extirpate, like Hercules, the bandits who invade your States, but also to exterminate the monster which came to you from the confines of the earth. My brother has only had to do with poor 'coopers' (the Circles Army); they say he has beaten them, but I do not believe it, or we should see the results already. All I can say is, that they are very frightened. Wagner has been surprised to see you shine in the ranks of his colleagues. He has already been happy enough to follow your ideas, but the disease is terribly tenacious; it must be so as you are interested in it, and that it does

not change; far from it, for I get weaker daily. Nevertheless, my mind is always with me.

"*P.S.*—My sister Amélie is happy to have had the joy of seeing you. If I was in health," she ends with a touch of her old courage and political zeal, "I would brave the Russians and the Pandours. But being unable materially to show my zeal for the State, allow me to do it for your pleasure by offering you some trifles which Heaven grant you may soon enjoy."

In the Queen Mother's will her china had been left to the Margravine, to replace the collection which had been burnt. But, through her sister Amélie, Wilhelmina declined to accept it, giving herself the pleasure of making with it one last present to Frederic.

Communication was constant between d'Adhémar and Voltaire, and the latter was kept informed of the tragic state of things at Baireuth. His last letter to the Margravine is dated September 27th, but found her too ill to reply. Frederic was hurrying Cothenius to her; Voltaire wrote that his most pressing care was to beg her to send Tronchin, his doctor friend at Geneva, an account of her disease.

"You have never had, Madame, any reason to love life. You know how dear this life is to all who have the happiness of approaching Your Royal Highness. If there is anyone capable of giving you relief and of prolonging such precious days, it is Tronchin. In the name of all beings with influence, Madame, do not delay consulting him; and if it was necessary for him to come to you, or if, being unable to come, he was of opinion that you could undertake the journey, there is not a moment to lose; you must live, all the rest does not matter. I am pierced with grief and anxiety, and the feelings overpower the deep respect and the affectionate devotion of the old Swiss hermit brother,

"VOLTAIRE.

"I hope Monseigneur will be of my opinion."

The King heard from the Margrave that the powders of "ashes of Genièvre" he had sent had been beneficial to the invalid. "I have received, praise be to Heaven, some letters from Baireuth which give me some hope. Here, my dear brother," he wrote to Henry, "is a ray of sunshine through a thick cloud," and he replied to the

Margrave that he hoped the new treatment, if kept up through the winter, might lead to good results.

On October 12th, Frederic, at Rodewitz, two miles north of the little Wendish village of Hochkirch, his camp on the heights opposite Daun's position, wrote his last letter to Wilhelmina. Enclosing what was to be her funeral ode, he poured himself out to her in his agony.

"My dearest Sister,

"Deign to receive with kindness the news I send to you. I am so full of you, of your dangers, and of my gratitude, that, waking or dreaming, in poetry as in prose, your face pervades my mind and attracts all my thoughts. May Heaven grant the prayers that I daily send up for your convalescence! Cothenius is *en route*; I will deify him if he saves the person in the world whom my heart most clings to, that I respect and venerate, till the moment I give back my body to the elements."

But neither letter nor poem were to reach her. For the slight improvement had been but the flicker of the candle in the socket. Cothenius arrived, indeed, to find the Margravine still alive; but all the care, all the love, all the philosophy, of those devoted to her, were no longer of any avail.

The facile pen had dropped from the gifted hand, and now the glib tongue was hushed. But the keen mind was clear to the end. "The few words that Her Royal Highness could utter," wrote Cothenius, "were fervent wishes for Your Majesty's long and happy life," as Wilhelmina, in the presence of her husband and of her daughter, "whose grief was sad to see," passed into the Silent Land, in the early hours of that misty autumn morning, when the surprise of Hochkirch fell on Frederic. There, among the dank forests of the Spree, 13,000 dead and wounded, the Prussian guns turned on themselves, 100 lost, his brother-in-law, his friend Keith, Moritz von Dessau gone—defeat and retreat! Mercifully Wilhelmina was not to know. "The dead," wrote Frederic, "are happier than the living!"

L'ENVOI.

The Margravine Wilhelmina died at two o'clock on the morning of Saturday, October 14th, 1758, aged forty-nine years. She lies, not in the gloomy and crowded Fürstengruft under St. Madeleine, but beneath the Margravial gallery in the church of the Old Castle. The funeral, which took place on Wednesday, October 18th, was, by the Margravine's own wish, very simple and quiet, a striking contrast to the pomp and splendour with which she had loved to surround herself when living. By her express injunction, the Reformed Court Chaplain, Wüst, was not to mention her by name in his funeral sermon, for which she herself chose the text: "Vanity of Vanities." Her correspondence with the King, her father, the Margravine instructed her husband to burn, but Frederic's letters she ordered to be sealed and laid upon her heart in her coffin. A few weeks later, however, he sent to claim them.

The Margrave married again within the year, Wilhelmina's niece, Princess Sophie of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, twenty-six years his junior. He only survived his first wife five years, and died, rather suddenly, the week of the conclusion of the Seven Years' War, leaving no son. His sarcophagus rests in the same place as that of Wilhelmina; that of Frederica, Duchess of Würtemberg, who died in 1780, poisoned, it is said, by the excessive use of cosmetics, divides her parents. Two years after her death the three coffins were encased in the marble sarcophagi where they now rest, by the

Margrave Alexander. But there is no inscription to mark in which the Margravine Wilhelmina lies.

On the fourth day after Hochkirch fell "the most pungent, sacredly tragic of Frederic's sorrows, now and onward." That he was not entirely unprepared the "*Épître à ma Sœur de Baireuth sur sa Maladie*" shows us. Moreover, de Catt, his reader and friend, tells how he found the King after dinner, on October 16th, "with tears in his eyes. You see me very sad, *mon ami*, and in great anxiety about the state of my sister. I am occupied with her at this moment; I have made a sketch of an *Épître* for her, and I wish to work it up carefully while I am in these quarters. This sister is infinitely dear to me; if I have the misfortune to lose her, nothing would hold me any longer to life."

The news came from the Margrave, and from Cothenius to Eichel, the King's private secretary at Dresden: "It seems to me one of the greatest misfortunes . . . it will cause the King endless affliction. . . . I have to send it on with every imaginable precaution. D'Adhémar also wrote to prepare the King for the blow. De Catt has given us a graphic account of those terrible first days.

"It was a quarter of an hour after his dinner, in the evening. '*Mon cher*,' he said to me, with tears in his eyes, 'read this letter.' The Marquis d'Adhémar, Grand Chamberlain of the Court of the Margravine, announced that she was very ill, and so extremely weak as to give rise to great apprehensions for her life. I gave the King the letter. 'Ah! my dear friend, it is a letter to prepare me for the worst. I am sure my dear sister is no more. I received the fatal letter when riding round camp, and had to compose my face for fear my people should think the affairs of the State are desperate.' The King then recited the verses from Iphigenia to me:

"'Juste ciel, c'est ainsi qu'assurant ta vengeance,
Tu rompes tous ressorts de ma vaine prudence,
Encore, si je pouvais, comme dans mon malheur,
Par les larmes au moins soulager ma douleur.

"'Triste destin des rois! Esclaves que nous sommes,
Et des rigueurs du sort et des discours des hommes,
Nous nous voyons sans cesse assiégés de témoins—
Et les plus malheureux osent pleurer le moins.'

"He wept much. 'Certainly this loving sister is no more. What do you think, *mon ami*, that she is dead? Speak, *mon cher*, do not flatter me!' . . . 'More than courage is necessary to bear such losses, *mon cher*. . . . I have enough to repair all the misfortunes of the 14th. Order my brother to come here, and you will see that Daun will not cull any advantage from the blow he has given us, but how to repair the loss with which I am threatened, how can I get back this sister, this noble, lovable sister, who cherished me so, and from my earliest youth; when I wrote my *Épître* to this sister, and described to her all the ardour of my love, could I believe that she would be so soon reft from me? Are all misfortunes to burst on me!'"

The King, weeping much, begged de Catt not to go far away. At 2 a.m. a servant came to call him, saying:

"an orderly brought news of the death of Madame the Margrave. The King rose at once; and is busy writing letters. I came and found him sobbing, and was in his presence some minutes before he could say a word.

"At last he cried: 'My sister is lost to me, beyond recall, *mon cher*; I shall see her no more; this is the most horrible blow which could have fallen on me! Thus do I lose brother, sister, mother, all that is dearest to me. These losses fell one on another, one loss accompanies the other.'"

(The King heard of his mother's death after the battle of Kollin, whilst raising the siege of Olmütz of that of the Prince of Prussia, and of the Margravine's, three days after the surprise of Hochkirch.)

"'Soon, alas! I shall have no more friends or relations, death snatches away everything; my life is most unfortunate.'"

In the early morning a letter from the King summoned de Catt again. He came to meet him and embraced him; "his tears bathed my cheeks." He referred to Providence, but also to the little box (of poison?) he wore round his neck!

His hasty letter of that morning, hurrying his brother with his columns to his aid, ends with the expressive postscript: "*Grand Dieu, ma sœur de Baireuth!*" Next day he wrote to condole with his friend, the Earl Marshal of Scotland, on the loss of his brother, "my

brave Marshal Keith, and, as if all the sorrows are to unite to overwhelm me, the Princess of Baireuth, that sister the most beloved, and who deserved it, has been snatched from me."

Eichel wrote to Finkenstein, the Minister in Berlin, that—

"the demise of Her Highness of Baireuth concerns me with regard to His Majesty much more, so to speak, than all the military operations, as I judge how very much he will feel it and how overwhelmed he will be . . . in spite of all care to gradually prepare His Majesty for it, this sad news had made an indescribably deep impression upon him, and I do not think that grief could be more acute."

To the Margrave he sent that last letter and the poem which Wilhelmina had not received:

"You will see in it what I think. After this awful loss life is more hateful to me than ever, and there will be for me no more happiness till I rejoin her who no longer sees the light of day."

At the bottom of a letter to his old friend, Frau von Wreech, he added the date: "Received the 30th August, 1758, the year when I lost all that I had to live for in the world."

Eighteen years after, he wrote to his friend d'Alembert, condoling with him on the death of Mdlle. de Lespinasse:—

"I have had friends, both men and women; I have lost five or six, and I thought to die of my grief. By a mere chance these losses fell upon me during the different wars in which I have been engaged. . . . There is in truth no remedy but that of time."

The King passed a gloomy winter at Breslau.

"Like a Carthusian monk," he wrote to D'Argens, "I dine alone, I spend my life in reading and writing. I do not sup. When one is sad, it becomes at last too burdensome to hide one's grief continually, and it is better to give way to it by oneself. . . . Maupertuis was right; the sum of evil does certainly surpass that of good, but to me it is all one. I have almost nothing more to lose."

To the memory of Wilhelmina Frederic reared monuments in poetry, prose, and marble. To Voltaire he

turned very shortly after her death, "as it was easy for you to judge of the loss I have sustained" . . . "never to forget her, and to summon, I beg you, all your powers to raise a memorial in her honour. You have only to do her justice, and, without deviating from the truth, you will find ample and beautiful material. I wish you more peace and happiness than I have." Voltaire felt unequal to the task, much as he mourned the "loss of a Princess to whom I was under the greatest obligations. . . . She had much *esprit*, and many talents; I was very much attached to her, and she never for a moment failed me," he wrote selfishly to the Duchess of Gotha. He felt dissatisfied with his Ode to the—

"*Ombre illustre, ombre chère, âme héroique et pure,*

"dictated, Sire, by grief shortly after the first shock with which I was overwhelmed. . . . I am old, you will easily perceive that. But my heart, which will always be devoted to you and to the beloved sister whom you weep, will never age. I cannot help remembering in these feeble verses the efforts made by this noble Princess to give peace to Europe. All her letters (as you doubtless are aware) passed through me. The minister who absolutely shared her views, and could only reply to her by a letter dictated to him, died of grief over it."

Frederic himself felt the poem should be "more striking and public. All Europe must mourn with me for a virtue so little known. My name must not share this eulogy; all the world must know that she is worthy of immortality, and you must give it her. . . . I think your pen alone worthy of doing this service to one who will be the eternal subject of my tears"; and he sent his own "verses, written under canvas," which, if not "worthy of her, at least are the true expression of my feelings." Voltaire's second attempt pleased the King much. To de Catt he wrote that the Funeral Oration was "all interesting; the end made on me a vivid impression, such as that of Bossuet did not produce. What shall I say? It moved me." "It is very beautiful . . . the first moment of comfort I have had in six

months. I beg you to have it printed and spread abroad in the four quarters of the world."

> *"O Baireuth! ô vertus, ô grâces adorées!*
> *Femme sans préjugés, sans vice, et sans erreur,*
> *Quand la mort t'enleva de ces tristes contrées,*
> *De ce séjour de sang, de rapine et d'horreur, &c."*

began Voltaire in an Elegy, says Ste. Beuve, "more agitated than moved." In truth, not only did the philosopher lack the lyric gift, but he also had not "the solemnity, the authority both of word and of doctrine, the religious immortality drawn from the source of belief and accepted and ingrained in the heart," which we find in *Lycidas* and *In Memoriam* and miss in *Adonaïs*. Both Frederic and Voltaire, "at the solemn and moving moment, are requited for their doctrines; they find a bedrock of barrenness which nothing can redeem. The only funeral oration conceivable for the true epicurean is this: 'All is finished, it is irreparable; we ourselves shall be the same to-morrow. Let us weep in silence!'"

Wilhelmina's faithful d'Adhémar penned a memorial in prose, an "*Éloge Historique*," of his patroness, of which he sent a copy to Frederic, whose sorrow echoes now and again in his poems. Nor was she forgotten when the King came to write the history of his great war; he gave her a niche among his heroes.

"She was a Princess of rare worth. She had a mind cultivated and adorned with fine information, an intellect equal to any, and an especial talent for all the arts. The happy gifts of Nature, however, were the least of what could be said in her praise. The kindness of her heart, her generous and charitable impulses, the nobleness and high tone of her soul, the sweetness of her character united in her brilliant superiority of mind to a foundation of solid virtue which never belied itself. She often experienced the ingratitude of those whom she had loaded with gifts and favours, and it is not possible to quote an instance in which she ever failed anyone. The most affectionate, the most faithful friendship united the King and his noble sister. These ties had been formed since their earliest childhood; the same bringing up and the same feelings had drawn them closer together; an unfaltering fidelity on both sides made them

indissoluble. This Princess, of delicate health, took the danger which threatened her family so much to heart that grief finally ruined her constitution. Her disease was soon apparent: the doctors saw that it was a chronic dropsy; their treatment could not save her; she died on October 14th, with the braveness and a steadfastness of soul worthy of the most courageous philosophers. It was the very day that the King was beaten at Hochkirch by the Austrians."

More natural, but not more true, was the little sketch Frederic gave, weeping, to de Catt, the day he heard that hope had fled.

"It is to her, as I think I have told you, that I owe in great measure what little good there is in me; it is she that has often made me restrain myself to moderate constitutional impulsiveness, which often went too far. She urged me on to work, she made me feel that every man, every prince, and especially a prince who is called upon to rule, should early imbibe the habit of work; that he should use all his ability and all his powers to acquire solid knowledge, in order by its means to fit himself to govern well; she described to me those indolent, voluptuous, unenlightened princes who would not and could not do anything of themselves, without being always at the mercy of those who surrounded them, and, always, by that advice and impulsion causing irreparable evils, and, though otherwise good, were overwhelmed with contempt and popular hatred. 'My dear brother,' she said to me one day when I was in close arrest, 'how can you labour successfully by wise laws and useful institutions, for the peace and happiness of the subjects you will one day govern, if you do not zealously cultivate the talents with which Nature has endowed you; and what a pleasure for you, my dear brother, when you have fulfilled all the duties of the crown, so noble when well performed, to be able to consecrate to the Muses and to art, whose acquaintance I recommend you to make, the leisure duty allows us.' It was she, in fact, *mon ami*, who, after having instilled in me the predominant taste of occupying and instructing myself, of conducting things for myself without being forced to be led by others, constantly supported me in my private troubles, and lightened the burden by the proofs of such a surprising affection; judge then, after all that I have told you, *mon cher*, if life could be pleasant to me after losing a sister so beloved. Ah! if to save the sister, who, perhaps, at this moment when I am speaking to you, is no more, if to prolong a life which is so precious to me, I should have to pledge myself to death, which sooner or later a thousand accidents might bring about, with what a touching pleasure I would sacrifice my sad existence!"

In the grounds of the great palace, built by the King at Potsdam, to demonstrate to the world that his long war had not ruined him, Frederic reared, in the after years, his own *sanctum sanctorum* to the beloved memory, *Wilhelminæ sacrum*. The idea of a Temple of Friendship sprang from Voltaire's poem. On the Corinthian pillars which support the severely classical little rotunda hang medallions of the rare "heroes of friendship" of antiquity, of which he wrote to Wilhelmina. Only Baireuth artists were employed. Carl von Gontart designed the temple, the sculptor brothers Ränz carved the statue within. Wilhelmina, in classical drapery, her large eyes riveting the spectator, sits, holding Folichon on her knees. Hither, in his extreme old age, the "*alter Fritz*" loved to wander, and, leaning on his crutch, to muse sadly over "that example of a friendship so rare," he wrote, "in all the ages, and even more so in this."

THE END.

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